DAILY
THE MAIL

Sukkur Edititon | Tuesday, November 24, 2026 | Vol.50, No 325 | 12 PAGES | PKR 50

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Pakistan, Malaysia vow to deepen defence ties



Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of the Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim on Monday reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening bilateral defence ties, the military's media affairs wing said.

The development came as CDF Munir undertook an official visit to Malaysia, where he called on PM Ibrahim in Putrajaya, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement.

It said that the visit was aimed at further strengthening bilateral defence and military cooperation between the two countries.

"The meeting focused on bilateral relations, defence and security cooperation, and evolving regional and global security dynamics.

"Both leaders exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and underscored the importance of sustained engagement to promote regional peace, stability and security," ISPR said.

According to the statement, the Malaysian premier "warmly welcomed" CDF Munir and acknowledged the "longstanding bonds of friendship, mutual trust and cooperation between Pakistan and Malaysia".

"He reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations, particularly in the fields of defence and security," it stated.

Meanwhile, CDF Munir appreciated Malaysia's constructive role in promoting peace and stability in Southeast Asia and reiterated Pakistan's resolve to further deepen defence cooperation and institutional linkages between the Armed Forces of both countries, the statement said.

"Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening bilateral defence ties through regular high-level exchanges, enhanced military cooperation and sustained dialogue on regional and international security issues," the ISPR said.

The statement added that CDF Munir also held a meeting with Malaysian Defence Minister Mohamed Khaled bin Nordin.

"Both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, with particular emphasis on expanding bilateral defence cooperation, strengthening military-to-military engagements and exploring new avenues of collaboration between the armed forces of the two countries," it said.

Upon arrival at the Ministry of Defence in Kuala Lumpur, CDF Munir was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour, it said. The statement added that Malaysian Chief of Defence Force General Tan Sri Haji Malek Razak Sulaiman, along with the chiefs of the Malaysian Army, Royal Malaysian Navy and Royal Malaysian Air Force, were present on the occasion.

The ISPR said that CDF Munir would also visit the National Defence Studies Centre, where a formal ceremony would be held to induct him as the 21st member of its prestigious Hall of Fame. NEWS DESK

Naqvi in spotlight as new units debate intensifies

■ Briefs PM Shehbaz on law and order ■ Holds separate huddle with Shujaat Hussain



Amid growing debate on the issue of creation of new provinces, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

According to an official handout from the Prime Minister Office (PMO), the interior minister met the prime minister in Islamabad and briefed him on the law and order situation in the country.

The two also discussed the prevailing situation in the country, the statement said.

Earlier in the day, Naqvi had met with Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his residence in Lahore. The debate over the creation of new provinces and devolution of powers came under discussion during the meeting. The meetings came amid an ongoing political debate over the creation of new provinces, with several political leaders pushing for a nationwide referendum to settle the matter.

It was sparked by Naqvi's July remarks, wherein he called for the formation of new administrative units in the country, saying the current "system" of governance had "collapsed" and needed a "reset".

In Monday's meeting, Naqvi and Shujaat discussed the overall political situation, measures to maintain law and order and the need to transfer power to the grassroots level, according to a statement issued by the interior ministry after the meeting.

During the discussion, Shujaat said the question of creating new provinces was directly linked to public convenience, good governance, administrative efficiency and the country's future. "Strengthening existing administrative units and making them more empowered can also be an effective way to address governance-related challenges. The biggest stakeholders of Pakistan are its ordinary people," Shujaat was quoted as saying, adding that decisions should be made in accordance with the aspirations of the people.

"If we do not take steps in the right direction today, tomorrow will not forgive us," he remarked.

Naqvi said it was imperative to take all decisions in accordance with the wishes of the people of Pakistan. The interior minister also briefed the PML-Q leader on the government's counterterrorism and peacekeeping measures in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Punjab Minister for Industries Chaudhry Shafay Hussain were also present at the meeting.

Last week, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry insisted that a referendum on the formation of new provinces "will happen" amid the debate on new provinces.

In his remarks on Friday, Chaudhry had maintained that the PML-N would undertake "every last effort" to convince the PPP.

"A referendum is neither non-constitutional nor undemocratic; the public's opinion can be sought on any important matter," he had said. NEWS DESK

Opposition leaders vow not to let Imran meet Bhutto's fate

■ Achakzai, Nasir Abbas write to SC, FCC, IHC top judges over Imran, Bushra's health

The opposition leaders have written letters to several senior government and judicial officials, expressing serious concerns over the health and living conditions of PTI founder Imran Khan and demanding the protection of his fundamental rights in prison.

Speaking to the media, Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Aain Pakistan spokesperson Akhunzada Hussain Yousafzai said letters had been sent to the Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court, Speaker of the National Assembly, Chairman Senate, Superintendent of Adiala Jail, Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad.

He said the letters highlighted concerns regarding the health of the PTI founder and included a copy of his previously written letter. References to an interview with the head of a human rights organisation had also been incorporated.

Yousafzai said the opposition had made it clear that they would not allow Imran Khan to meet the same fate as former prime minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

"We are demanding the fundamental rights of a prisoner, but these rights are not being implemented," he said.

He added that the letter also raised concerns about the health of Bushra Bibi and called for appropriate arrangements to address the risks to her well-being.

Yousafzai alleged that Bushra Bibi was being kept in prison as part of an attempt to exert pressure on Imran Khan and break his resolve.

Referring to Imran Khan's most recent meeting, he said the PTI founder had directed his party not to make any compromise under any circumstances.

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Democracy must anchor any political 'reset'

■ PPP chief calls for parliamentary supremacy, institutional trust ■ Urges rival leaders to abandon politics of hatred and division

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Monday called for restoring the supremacy of Parliament as well as trust in the judiciary and the electoral system.

He made the remarks while addressing the inauguration ceremony to mark the launch of the Sindh Youth Card in Karachi.

"To restore the trust of Pakistan's youth, if any reset is to take place, it must be a democratic reset," the party leader said.

"If a democratic reset happens, then the people's stake will remain, and through that reset, we must restore the supremacy of our Parliament. We must restore confidence in our judiciary, and the election system we have, we must restore trust in it now."

Bilawal's remarks come as the debate over a "system reset" in the country has intensified over the past few months. In July, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi stirred a political storm by calling for the creation of new administrative units, arguing that the current system of governance had "collapsed" and needed a "reset".

Last week, in a hard-hitting speech, the PPP chairman asserted that the governance system had not collapsed, but was rather "made to collapse".



"Every child in this country hates corruption. The youth [of Pakistan] want to see a country where there is no corruption. They want it, and we also want to join together and build such a Pakistan," he said on Monday.

According to Bilawal, to achieve that objective, two things needed to be done: the first was to use modern digital technology, whether it was the Youth Card or Kissan Card, to build systems that shut down avenues for corruption.

"Along with that, we have to build a system that functions without discrimination," he added.

"Instead of taking revenge, [the system] works to fix our situation."

Bilawal stressed that the restoration of trust would have to be a "joint effort" — to restore the opposition's trust in the government and vice versa, and the public's trust in the country's system, its parliament, judiciary and media.

He said if such conditions were created, Pakistan could achieve unity for the first time, enabling it to confront economic hardships, terrorism and climate change-related disasters.

"I know that a Pakistan that is united, [will] have the ability to face any crisis, any disaster, any catastrophe."

"At the same time, I fear that if we keep fighting among ourselves and remain divided further, and [spread hatred] in society instead of hope, then we will not have the capacity to face any crisis," Bilawal added.

"Then whatever happens to Pakistan, whatever negative consequences occur, the youth will hold us accountable, asking, 'You were there, what did you do to save us from this trouble?' And at least I want when that question is asked, I can proudly, with my head held high, say that my intentions were good," he said.

The Bhutto scion claimed he had poured his blood and sweat into resolving the nation's issues.

"I made this effort so conditions would be created in this country enabling us to serve you," he said.

"And if I succeed, then it will be for the benefit of Pakistanis, for the benefit of our country. Even if I fail, history will remember that a young man stood up and tried."

At the outset of his speech, Bilawal said he had been a part of Pakistan's politics for twenty years, during which he maintained ties with all political parties and politicians.

"Given the circumstances we face today, and the position we are in, if I myself am disillusioned, one can only imagine how the people of Pakistan, especially the youth, must feel," he said.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, Sindh Sports Minister Sardar Mohammad Bux Khan Mahar, and other PPP leaders. NEWS DESK

National



Another Rs 3 per litre cut in petrol price

World



Sheikh Hasina Faces Arrest On Return

Money



Gold price rebounds by Rs 7,800 per tola

Sports



PSL Opener, Ceremony In Peshawar: Naqvi

Glamour



Kim Kardashian Stuns At Vegas GP For Hamilton

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Nvidia reinstates Huang

NATIONAL

DTM

Karachi Marble City set to benefit from Italian technology



A delegation of Italian industry experts has visited Marble City Karachi (MCK) Industrial Park to explore opportunities for introducing advanced Italian technologies, technical expertise and specialised skills to Pakistan's marble and natural stone industry. The visit focused particularly on the proposed Common Facility and Training Centre (CFTC), envisioned as a major step towards modernising the country's marble processing sector.

Marble City Karachi is a flagship industrial development project of the Government of Sindh, being implemented under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode through the Sindh Economic Zones Management Company (SEZMC). The initiative is being pursued under the leadership of Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, with the support of Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Investment and Public-Private Partnerships Syed Qassim Naveed Qamar.

The visit reflects SEZMC's ongoing engagement with Confindustria Marmomacchine, Italy's leading industry association representing more than 350 companies specialising in marble, natural stone, processing machinery and related technologies. The collaboration aims to promote institutional cooperation and facilitate the transfer of modern technologies, international best practices and specialised technical knowledge to Pakistan.

The visiting delegation comprised Eng. Paolo Marone, President IS.I.M Italy, and Eng. Claudia, Vice President IS.I.M Italy, accompanied by Dr. Salvatore Parano and Eng. A. R. Daudpota of the Italian Trade Agency (ITA), Pakistan.

During the visit, the Italian experts received a detailed briefing on the development progress, infrastructure, proposed facilities and overall vision of the 300-acre industrial park. Discussions focused on the technical requirements and potential role of Italian expertise in establishing the proposed CFTC as a modern hub for shared processing facilities, technology demonstrations, professional training and capacity building.

The proposed centre is expected to offer a range of advanced facilities, including stone cutting, sawing, polishing, finishing, profiling, CNC machinery, automated processing systems, digital design, manufacturing, product development, prototyping and quality assurance. The experts also explored technologies aimed at improving material recovery, reducing production waste, recycling marble by-products and promoting environmentally sustainable processing practices.

A key area of discussion was the introduction of practical, industry-oriented training programmes, including hands-on machinery operations, technical demonstrations, training of trainers, equipment maintenance and professional certification. The proposed CFTC aims to provide Pakistani businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), access to modern machinery and specialised technical capabilities without requiring substantial individual investment. The engagement also explored long-term institutional partnerships with Italian machinery manufacturers, technical institutions and industry specialists to support the centre's planning, equipment selection, development and future operations. NEWS DESK

Gulbai Road upgrade to boost connectivity



Karachi Mayor Barrister Murtaza Wahab visited the under-construction Gulbai Road development project to review the progress of ongoing construction work and assess the improvements being made to one of the city's key arterial routes.

Speaking during the visit, the Mayor said the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gulbai Road would provide better commuting facilities to thousands of people travelling to and from Hub River Road, Shershah and the SITE Industrial Area. He added that the project would significantly improve connectivity between major industrial and commercial areas, making transportation easier for commuters, industrial workers, transporters and the business community.

The Mayor said the improvement of Gulbai Road was particularly important given its role in supporting Karachi's industrial activities and daily traffic movement. Its completion would help facilitate the movement of goods and passengers while contributing to smoother transportation across the city's industrial corridors.

Earlier, Barrister Murtaza Wahab also inspected road construction work in Clifton Block-5. He said the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) was simultaneously accelerating the reconstruction of the dual carriageway between Sakhi Hasan Graveyard and Shadman in District Central.

He highlighted that essential underground infrastructure work had been completed before the road reconstruction. The existing stormwater drain was completely rebuilt, while new sewerage lines were also installed to improve drainage and ensure the long-term durability of the road.

The Mayor maintained that KMC was sustaining the pace of development activities across Karachi. He observed that the municipal corporation, which previously faced financial constraints in undertaking development projects, was now delivering tangible improvements through its ongoing initiatives. According to him, the progress of these projects reflects the institution's renewed focus on addressing the city's infrastructure needs.

He emphasised that development schemes were being executed across all districts without discrimination, adding that the provision of quality roads, improved infrastructure and better transportation facilities remained among KMC's foremost priorities. Barrister Wahab further stated that the completion of ongoing development projects would not only improve the daily lives of Karachi's residents but also support commercial and industrial growth. He stressed that the upgradation of roads and essential urban infrastructure was crucial for improving mobility, reducing travel difficulties and saving citizens' valuable time and resources.

He added that KMC was undertaking development initiatives in different parts of the city to address longstanding civic challenges and improve public facilities.

Reaffirming his commitment to Karachi's development, the Mayor said that ongoing projects would continue without interruption and all available resources would be utilised for public welfare and the city's overall progress.

He appreciated the dedication and hard work of the KMC team, saying that municipal officials and workers were making concerted efforts to complete development projects efficiently so that citizens could benefit from improved infrastructure and better civic facilities. NEWS DESK

Asian Academy picks Pakistani as fellow

Prominent Pakistani scientist Prof. Dr. Muhammad Raza Shah, Director of the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, has been elected as a Fellow (Academician) of the Asian Academy of Sciences (AAS), representing Pakistan.

According to an ICCBS spokesperson, the Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS) has congratulated Prof. Dr. Muhammad Raza Shah and other distinguished PAS Fellows on their election, describing the achievement as a significant recognition for Pakistan's scientific community.

The announcement was made by the Hong Kong-headquartered Asian Academy of Sciences during its General Assembly Session and the first Asian High-Level Scientific Forum, titled "Belt and Road: Shaping a Shared Scientific and Technological Future", held in Sanya, China, from October 19 to 23, 2026. The academy recognised Prof. Shah's extensive contributions to chemistry, nanomedicine and clinical trials, particularly his research in developing innovative scientific and medical applications.



Speaking on Monday, the ICCBS spokesperson said that Prof. Shah was actively involved in pioneering research in nanomedicine and clinical trials. He has authored more than 580 research publications, with a cumulative impact factor exceeding 2,180. His research has received over 13,450 citations, while his H-index stands at 60. In addition to his research publications, Prof. Shah has authored seven books, edited four books and contributed nine book chapters published by Elsevier. He also holds several patents registered in the United States and Pakistan, reflecting his contributions to scientific research and innovation.

Prof. Shah has received numerous national and international awards in recognition of his scientific achievements. These include the prestigious Khwarizmi International Award from Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, Pakistan's civil awards Sitara-i-Imtiaz and Tamgha-i-Imtiaz, the Dr. Raziuddin Siddiqi Prize, the Prof. Atta-ur-Rahman Gold Medal awarded by the Pakistan Academy of Sciences, the Avicenna Science and Innovation Award from Brain Trust UK, and the Abdus Salam Prize in Chemistry.

He was also selected as a TWAS Young Affiliate in 2010 by The World Academy of Sciences and was included among the top scientists of 2019 by the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. NEWS DESK

Hoax bomb threat forces building evacuation

A bomb threat at a building near Karachi Press Club (KPC) drew a response from multiple authorities on Monday but was found to have been a hoax, according to police. Rangers, police and rescue teams rushed to the scene after receiving information that explosive material had been placed at Lakson Square Building No. 2, located opposite the main gate of KPC.

The building was vacated and after a thorough search by bomb experts, it was declared safe.

Deputy Inspector General (South) Syed Asad Raza told that the building management had received a threat via email that explosives had been placed.

He said the police, Rangers, Rescue 1122 and Bomb Disposal Squad teams rushed to the site. He said that two teams of bomb experts conducted a search of the building premises and found it to be a hoax call.

The South police chief said the bomb experts searched the building completely from the first to the 10th floor, in the presence of the building security staff and the local police.

Other areas of the building were also searched in response to the bomb threat, but no detonating or explosive material was found, he said.

Raza said the police were investigating the case further.

Earlier this month, a train was stopped and evacuated at Punjab's Khanpur Railway Station following a threat that a bomb was planted on the Peshawar-bound Khyber Mail, travelling from Karachi.

According to the railway authorities, a suspicious bag was reported in one of the coaches of the train but no bomb or explosive material was found. NEWS DESK

Sikhs enjoy complete religious freedom in Pakistan: Governor



Sindh Governor Syed Nehal Hashmi has said that members of the Sikh community, like followers of all other religions in Pakistan, enjoy complete religious freedom, dignity, respect and protection, enabling them to perform their religious obligations and participate in social and business activities without fear.

He said the respect, honour and protection extended to the Sikh community in Pakistan reflected the country's commitment to religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

The governor expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held at Governor House Karachi to celebrate the 557th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Welcoming the participants, Governor Hashmi extended greetings to all guests on behalf of himself and Governor House. He also thanked Pakistan Sikh Youth Council President Sardar Magan Singh Khalsa and the Sikh community for selecting Governor House as the venue for celebrating the sacred occasion.

Referring to challenges faced by the Sikh community in a neighbouring country, he said Pakistan's message of religious freedom, security and mutual respect should reach the international community. He emphasised that Sikh citizens in Pakistan were free to practise their religion and observe their traditions. Highlighting the teachings of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the governor said his message of peace, love, brotherhood, equality and tolerance held universal significance. He noted that Baba Guru Nanak consistently preached belief in one God, honest earnings, sharing with others and eliminating discrimination among human beings.

He observed that these teachings remained particularly relevant at a time when the world was facing growing challenges to peace, harmony and mutual understanding.

Governor Hashmi said Sindh had historically been a land of Sufi saints and peace-loving spiritual personalities, where people belonging to different religions, cultures and communities had lived together for centuries with mutual respect and affection.

Referring to the vision of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he recalled his historic August 11, 1947, address, in which he emphasised equality of citizenship and freedom of religion for all Pakistanis.

He said the doors of Governor House remained open to people belonging to every religion and community, reflecting a practical commitment to Quaid-e-Azam's vision and the Constitution of Pakistan.

The governor also appreciated the Sikh community's contributions to the country's development, saying its members had earned distinction in business, education, social welfare, national defence and various other fields.

He assured the community that the Sindh government, particularly Governor House, would continue to extend all possible support for its welfare, protection of religious sites and promotion of interfaith harmony.

He also acknowledged the Pakistan Sikh Youth Council's efforts to promote peace, brotherhood and solidarity among young people.

Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan Sikh Youth Council President Sardar Magan Singh Khalsa, Madan Lal, Gurmukh Singh, Father Shakeel Gulzar and Mahesh Talreja highlighted the teachings of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji and stressed the importance of promoting love, peace, tolerance and interfaith harmony.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Governor Hashmi extended heartfelt congratulations to the Sikh community on the 557th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji and prayed that the occasion would bring renewed messages of peace, prosperity, love and brotherhood to Pakistan. NEWS DESK

NATIONAL DTM

Pakistan hosts 2026 IAEA Nuclear Security Network moot



Pakistan on Monday inaugurated the 2026 Annual Meeting of the International Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres (NSSC Network) at the Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security (PCENS), bringing together approximately 68 delegates from 49 member states to promote international cooperation and strengthen nuclear security capabilities.

The four-day meeting, being organised in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has brought together senior policymakers, nuclear regulators, security professionals, technical experts, academics and representatives of international organisations to discuss emerging challenges, exchange experiences and promote best practices in nuclear security training and capacity building.

Chairman Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) Zia Hussain Shah attended the opening ceremony as the chief guest. Representatives of the IAEA, government officials, delegates from participating countries and members of the diplomatic corps were also present.

Addressing the gathering, Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Khalil Hussain Hashmi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening nuclear security and maintaining its longstanding partnership with the IAEA.

Referring to Pakistan's hosting of the NSSC Network Annual Meeting in 2016, Ambassador Hashmi observed that the Network's return to Islamabad after a decade reflected its expanding international membership and growing significance.

He emphasised that effective nuclear security required strong national institutions, well-trained professionals and sustained international cooperation. He also highlighted the central role of the IAEA in strengthening the global nuclear security framework.

In his inaugural address, PNRA Chairman Zia Hussain Shah underscored the importance of human resource development and professional training in ensuring effective nuclear security. He acknowledged the Network's contribution to capacity building, technical cooperation and international knowledge-sharing.

He said the NSSC Network had developed into an important international platform for promoting sustainable nuclear security capabilities, with Pakistan contributing actively to its objectives through its national institutions.

In a video message, IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi thanked Pakistan for hosting the meeting for the second time, ten years after the country's previous hosting in 2016.

He highlighted the importance of the NSSC Network in bringing together Nuclear Security Support Centres as a global community of practice. He noted that the Network played a vital role in translating nuclear security principles into practical measures, particularly as countries increasingly expanded the peaceful use of nuclear technology in electricity generation, medicine and agriculture.

During the inaugural ceremony, the chief guest also unveiled a commemorative plaque marking the 15th Annual Meeting of the NSSC Network.

Participants acknowledged Pakistan's longstanding cooperation with the IAEA in developing national nuclear security infrastructure and strengthening technical capabilities. Pakistan made history in 2016 by becoming the first country outside the IAEA headquarters in Vienna to host the Network's annual meeting.

On the sidelines of the event, foreign ambassadors, IAEA representatives and international experts visited various laboratories at PCENS and appreciated the centre's advanced facilities for nuclear security training and professional development.

The meeting will continue until November 26 and will include visits to the National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS) at PNRA and the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS). Technical sessions, thematic discussions, working group meetings and expert exchanges will also form part of the programme, aimed at strengthening international partnerships and enhancing global nuclear security cooperation. NEWS DESK

SC sets two-year cap on inquiries against retirees

The Supreme Court has ruled that departmental proceedings against retired government employees must be concluded within two years of their retirement, observing that the concerned authorities have no legal authority to continue such proceedings after the expiry of the prescribed period.

A two-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan issued the ruling while deciding appeals relating to the medical retirement of employees of the Punjab Irrigation Department, allegations of fake medical certificates and the appointment of their children under the relevant employment quota. The court partially allowed appeals filed by the Punjab government.



In its judgment, the apex court held that Section 21 of the Punjab Employees Efficiency, Discipline and Accountability (PEEDA) Act, 2006, requires departmental proceedings against retired employees to be completed within two years of retirement. The court observed that the statutory language makes the time limit mandatory, leaving no discretion with the competent authorities to extend the proceedings beyond the prescribed period under the previous law.

The judgment also addressed a 2026 amendment to the PEEDA Act, which allows an extension of the two-year period subject to reasons being recorded in writing. However, the court clarified that the amendment would apply prospectively and could not be invoked retrospectively in the cases before it. The matters would therefore be decided under the legal provisions applicable at the relevant time.

The cases involved employees of the Punjab Irrigation Department who had retired on medical grounds. The department subsequently declared their medical certificates fake and initiated disciplinary proceedings against them. Their children had secured government employment under Rule 17-A on the basis of those certificates. The department later ordered the employees' dismissal and recovery of salaries.

The Supreme Court observed that the medical certificates in question had been issued by duly constituted medical boards and subsequently verified by health department officials. The court held that if the authenticity of the certificates was disputed, the matter should have been referred to the relevant medical board members for proper examination and inquiry.

Declaring the certificates fake and initiating disciplinary action without following this procedure was contrary to legal requirements, the judgment observed.

The court further emphasised that government employees must be provided a reasonable opportunity to explain their position and defend themselves before any decision is taken regarding dismissal, withholding of pension benefits or recovery of payments.

It also clarified that pension rules could not be used as a means to bypass the procedural safeguards and statutory time limits prescribed under the PEEDA Act.

The judgment additionally referred to the Supreme Court's earlier ruling in General Post Office Islamabad v. Muhammad Jalal, in which rules providing a special employment quota for the children of government employees had been declared invalid. However, the court clarified that the decision did not affect appointments already completed under the rules applicable at the relevant time.

The Supreme Court upheld the Punjab Service Tribunal's decision regarding the reinstatement of the employees while partially allowing the provincial government's appeals.

The apex court further directed that the period from the employees' dismissal until October 27, 2025, be treated as extraordinary leave without pay, while maintaining the remaining part of the tribunal's decision. NEWS DESK

NCCIA arrests suspect in Abbottabad on Google report

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) has arrested a suspect in Abbottabad following multiple cyber tipline reports submitted by Google through the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), concerning alleged child sexual abuse material.

According to the NCCIA, an investigation team led by Sub-Inspector Huma Aftab conducted an operation in Abbottabad and arrested the suspect.

During the operation, investigators recovered suspected child sexual abuse material and seized a laptop, two hard drives and two mobile phones from the suspect's possession.

In a separate case, the NCCIA also arrested a man in Lahore over allegations of online sexual exploitation and threatening a nine-year-old girl residing in the United States.

According to an NCCIA spokesperson, the investigation was initiated after the agency received a complaint from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) through the US Embassy in Islamabad. The complaint was subsequently forwarded to the NCCIA through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior.

The complaint alleged that an individual had used Google and TikTok accounts to solicit child sexual abuse material from the minor girl and threaten her online.

Based on preliminary information and account details provided by Google, investigators traced the alleged activity to Lahore's Johar Town area.

The NCCIA spokesperson said the investigation further established that local IP addresses had been used to access the account during March and April 2026.

Following approval from the Additional Director, an NCCIA team conducted an operation in Johar Town and arrested the suspect, identified as Muhammad Hashim Tahir.

Four nabbed in separate cybercrime cases

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) on Monday arrested four suspects in separate operations, planning to attack a building, blackmailing a woman with private videos and online child abuse.

Addressing a press conference at Wafaqi Colony Police Station, NCCIA Lahore Zone Additional Director Atif Ameer said the agency had arrested Muhammad Owais for allegedly sharing objectionable photographs and videos through his Facebook, TikTok and Instagram accounts.

A mobile phone was also recovered from his possession.

In another case,the agency arrested a 17-years-old student for allegedly planning to damage a building and harm people inside it.

Atif Ameer said that the investigation was initiated after technical information about conversations on the artificial Intelligence(AI) platform Claude AI came to light.

The suspect was traced through digital evidence and telecommunication records and arrested after obtaining a search warrant from the court, he added and said his mobile phone was also seized.

In a separate operation in Iqbal Town, the NCCIA arrested Furqan Raza for allegedly blackmailing his sister using her private pictures and videos. The suspect had allegedly threatened to circulate the material among relatives and prepared stamp papers to transfer half of the family property into his name. NEWS DESK

IHC seeks govt report on steps to protect kids from social media abuse

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday directed the federal government to submit a comprehensive report on measures being taken to protect children from social media misuse, online harassment and blackmailing, granting it one month to respond to the matter.

IHC Judge Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard several petitions concerning children's use of social media and the growing concerns surrounding online exploitation and harassment.

During the proceedings, Additional Attorney General (AAG) informed the court that a meeting of relevant stakeholders had been held on November 13 to discuss the issues. He requested additional time to submit a detailed response on behalf of the federal government.

Accepting the request, the court granted the government one month to file its reply.

The court also took up petitions challenging the Social Media Rules 2020. It observed that these petitions had become ineffective, following which the petitioner's counsel withdrew them. However, the IHC directed the federal government to submit its response concerning the Social Media Rules 2021.

Emphasising the need to address the misuse of digital platforms, the court directed the relevant authorities to ensure strict implementation of existing laws to prevent online harassment, blackmailing and other forms of cybercrime.

The court also sought detailed reports on complaints received regarding the misuse of social media and online offences involving children.

For this purpose, the IHC summoned comprehensive reports from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), seeking details of complaints and measures taken by the respective organisations.

The proceedings highlight growing judicial concern over children's safety in the digital environment and the need for effective coordination among government institutions and regulatory authorities to address online threats.

The court subsequently adjourned further proceedings until December 23, directing the concerned authorities to submit their reports and responses before the next hearing. NEWS DESK

Pakistan, Türkiye sign MoU to strengthen judicial cooperation

Pakistan and Türkiye on Monday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening judicial cooperation through institutional exchanges, professional training, capacity building and the sharing of legal expertise between the two countries.

The agreement was signed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi and President of Türkiye's Court of Cassation Ömer Korkez during the visit of a high-level Turkish judicial delegation to the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The MoU establishes a framework for cooperation in judicial education, legal research, professional development and institutional capacity building. It also provides for faculty exchanges and joint training programmes between Pakistan's Federal Judicial Academy and Türkiye's Justice Academy.

The areas identified for collaboration include cybercrime, financial crimes, constitutionalism, human rights, judicial ethics, climate justice, gender responsive justice, alternative dispute resolution and the integration of modern technology into judicial processes.

Under the agreement, both countries will also promote judicial exchanges, organise joint conferences and seminars, and facilitate the sharing of judicial decisions, legal developments and professional experiences.

To ensure effective implementation, the MoU envisages the establishment of a Joint Working Group on Judicial Cooperation. The group will identify priority areas, coordinate collaborative initiatives and monitor progress on the agreed programmes.



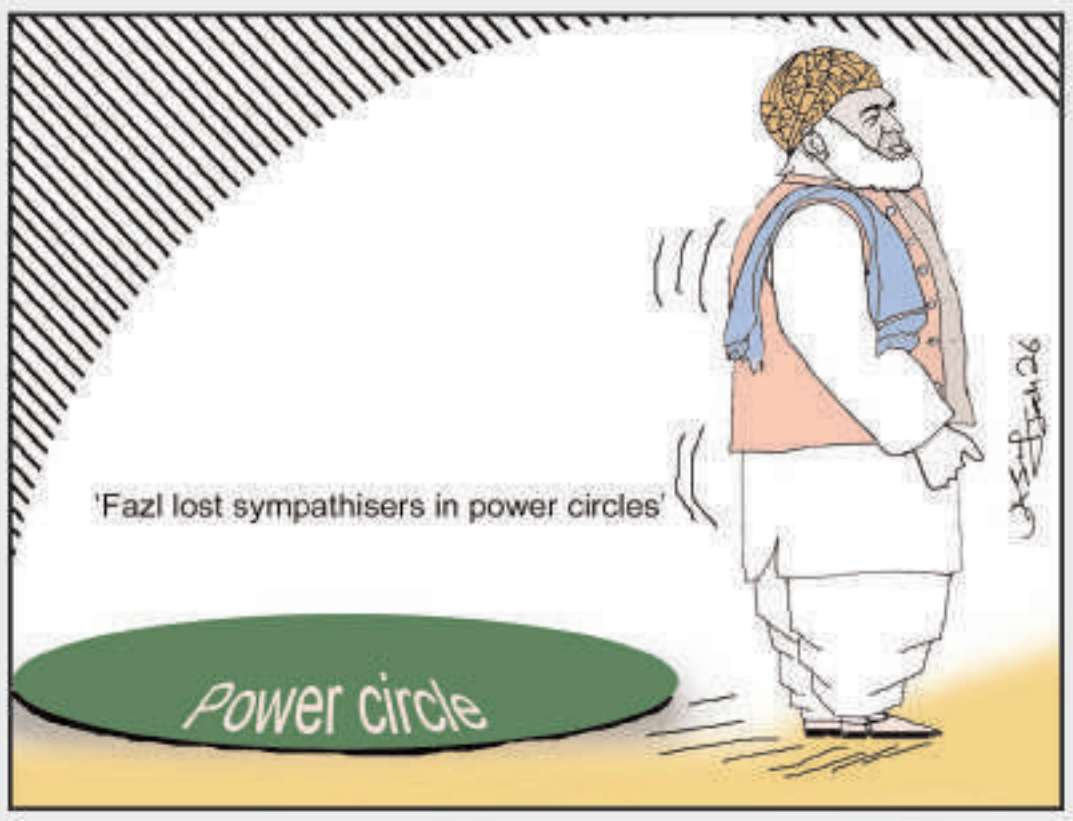
Welcoming the Turkish delegation, Chief Justice Yahya Afridi highlighted the historic, cultural and fraternal relations between Pakistan and Türkiye. He recalled the support extended by the people of the subcontinent during Türkiye's struggle for independence, particularly acknowledging the contributions of Abdur Rehman Peshawri.

He said the agreement would provide a practical institutional dimension to the longstanding friendship between the two countries by translating their historical bonds into meaningful judicial cooperation.

Referring to ongoing judicial reforms in Pakistan, the Chief Justice emphasised the importance of learning from international experiences and adopting best practices to improve access to justice, judicial predictability and institutional accountability.

President of Türkiye's Court of Cassation Ömer Korkez appreciated the hospitality extended to the visiting delegation and highlighted the shared commitment of both countries to the principles of justice and impartiality. He stressed the need for closer cooperation between the judiciaries of Pakistan and Türkiye to address emerging challenges associated with digitalisation, artificial intelligence, cross-border disputes and increasingly complex economic relations. NEWS DESK

EDITORIAL



Coalition partners trade political blows

The growing war of words between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has exposed fresh cracks in the ruling coalition, raising questions about its ability to maintain political unity. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's criticism of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has triggered a strong reaction from PPP leaders, with Senator Sherry Rehman and MNA Sharmila Faruqui accusing him of crossing political limits. The controversy began after Asif shared two video clips of Bilawal on November 19, questioning his political positions and accusing the younger generation of politicians of dishonesty and changing their stance for political benefit. Rehman described his remarks as unacceptable, while Faruqui said political disagreements should be settled through arguments rather than personal attacks. She also reminded the defence minister that his position demanded political maturity and respect for parliamentary traditions. The exchange followed Bilawal's November 17 speech at the Karachi Press Club, where he criticised some government decisions, supported certain opposition demands and called for a political reset.

The dispute shows a deeper problem within the coalition, where political differences are increasingly turning into personal attacks. The PPP, meanwhile, accused Asif of deliberately provoking its leadership and said Bilawal had advised party members to avoid personal attacks and focus on public issues. However, its reference to controversies surrounding the PML-N leadership, including the Panama Papers, Avenfield properties and Al-Azizia Steel Mills cases, showed how easily the dispute could turn into another round of political mudslinging. Such exchanges serve little public interest when the country needs political stability and cooperation on economic and governance challenges. Coalition partners do not have to agree on every issue, but they must maintain mutual respect and keep disagreements within democratic limits. President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have reportedly agreed to resolve differences through dialogue.

We need administrative reforms

Pakistan's expanding administrative machinery is putting further pressure on public finances at a time when the country urgently needs jobs, private investment and higher development spending. A growing government structure cannot be justified unless it delivers better public services and supports economic growth. According to a research report by the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMA) International, more than 3.5 million people enter the country's labour force every year, while unemployment among graduates aged 20 to 24 has reached 32.8%. The situation is even worse for women graduates, with unemployment standing at 42.3%. These figures highlight the widening gap between the number of people seeking work and the economy's ability to provide productive employment. The report, titled "ICMA's Fiscal Vision for Pakistan: Aligning Administrative Structures with Economic Realities", argues that administrative arrangements must reflect the country's economic needs and limited financial resources. This requires a shift from maintaining large government establishments towards policies that encourage investment, entrepreneurship and job creation.

The pressure is also visible in provincial budgets, where more than 80% of expenditure goes towards recurrent costs, leaving limited funds for development projects. Local governments, which are closest to citizens and businesses, received less than 5% of total government expenditure in 2024. This weak financial position limits their ability to improve basic services, support local businesses and address community needs. Delays in public-private partnership projects further restrict opportunities to attract private investment and share the burden of development. The ICMA report warns that expanding government departments without clearly defining their responsibilities and financial resources could increase public spending without improving service delivery. Pakistan cannot afford an administrative structure that consumes a large share of public money while leaving insufficient resources for economic development. The government needs to review departmental responsibilities, strengthen local governments and ensure that public spending produces measurable results. Administrative reform should not simply mean creating new offices or positions. It should mean making institutions more efficient, financially responsible and responsive to citizens.

India's Abandoned Infants

The evidence of India's failure surfaces in the country's soil and sewers. In July 2025, a woman in Haryana's Kaithal district allegedly suffocated her infant and hid the body in a cattle shed. In April 2025, police in Bengaluru's Yelahanka area found a stillborn infant dumped in a garbage bag after a minor gave birth in secret; the neighbor who discarded the bag on her behalf had no idea what it contained. In April 2026, locals rescued an infant left abandoned in a sack along the roadside near Kajuwahiya forest in the Dumka district of Jharkhand.

Data and accountability: Build a unified national data system that bridges the police, health, and Women and Child Development departments, ensuring transparency and rehabilitation support for the survivors of this collective neglect.

India abandons its youngest citizens and then looks away. Deceased infants turn up in garbage dumps, drains and forests across the country almost every month, yet the law treats each case as an isolated tragedy rather than a symptom of a broken system. The Constitution promises every child the right to life, but for an infant left in a plastic bag on a railway track, that promise usually arrives too late, only after the heartbeat has stopped. India needs a dedicated Infant Protection Act, not because compassion is lacking, but because the country's child protection laws are reactive by design.

India's infant abandonment problem is an invisible crime. Fragmented reporting and bureaucratic gaps bury its true scale beneath the headline reports. Three government systems capture a different slice of the picture, but none capture the whole of it:

Police and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB): These bodies register only the cases that reach a police station. They rarely count infants who do not survive unsafe, illegal abortions, since these babies are often never registered as having lived.

The health system: It tracks nearly every birth in India, yet it lacks an integrated mechanism to track infants who disappear from facilities or are abandoned nearby.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development: It monitors children already inside institutional care but has no tool to count the infants that perish in the field, rivers, toilets or open ground before anyone can reach them.

Without a single national database, policymakers govern in the dark. Team PasLoNaa, an Indian initiative that tracks infanticide and abandonment cases, argues that official NCRB and adoption-authority figures understate the problem and that its own state-by-state data tells a different story.

A preventable, recurring pattern

The evidence of India's failure surfaces in the country's soil and sewers. In July 2025, a woman in Haryana's Kaithal district allegedly suffocated her infant and hid the body in a cattle shed. In April 2025, police in Bengaluru's Yelahanka area found a stillborn infant dumped in a garbage bag after a minor gave birth in secret; the neighbor who discarded the bag on her behalf had no idea what it contained. In April 2026, locals rescued an infant left abandoned in a sack along the roadside near Kajuwahiya forest in the Dumka district of Jharkhand.

These are not isolated tragedies. They are representative of a systemic collapse. When infants turn up in garbage dumps, drains and forests, it proves that India's protective framework is not merely destitute but largely absent. Every infant deserves the right to life, protection, dignity and justice, yet across India, infants continue to be abandoned, killed, trafficked or left without protection.

Why general child protection laws fail infants

India's existing child protection laws, including the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, rest on a one-size-fits-all philosophy that fails the infant. An older child can run, scream or eventually identify an abuser. An infant has no such agency; its survival depends entirely on a ticking clock and the immediate intervention of public institutions.

Current laws are fundamentally reactive, waiting for a crime to be reported or a victim to be found. However, infant protection instead requires a proactive framework to protect newborns before harm occurs. Because an infant cannot testify or seek help, the state must carry a higher burden of proof and fund specialized forensic investigations that intervene before abandonment becomes death. General laws treat abandonment as a welfare issue; a dedicated Infant Protection Act would treat it as a core governance responsibility, one that mandates the state bridge the gap between discovery and dignity.



VIDYADHAR PRABHUDESAI

Vidyadhar Prabhudesai is an Indian entrepreneur and social-impact advocate

Lessons from safe haven laws abroad

India still treats a mother in crisis as a criminal first and a human being second. International models offer a more humane, life-saving alternative for both mother and child. Every US state now runs a Safe Haven law that lets a parent surrender an unharmed infant anonymously at a hospital, fire station or police post, without facing prosecution for abandonment.

Germany's baby hatches, or Babyklappen, work on a similar principle: A temperature-controlled hatch alerts staff the moment a parent leaves an infant, and the parent can walk away unseen. These structures are not an encouragement to abandon a child; they are an emergency exit that heads off the unsafe abandonment India sees today. Shifting the focus from punishment to preservation ensures that a crisis for the parent does not become a death sentence for the child.

A roadmap for an Infant Protection Act

India needs a law that moves the state's role from voluntary charity to a statutory obligation. This roadmap rests on three pillars:

Prevention and rescue: Establish nationwide safe-surrender points and anonymous birth provisions, backed by standardized national rescue protocols with mandatory response timelines that treat every abandoned infant as a medical and legal emergency.

Investigation and forensics: End the era of the uninvestigated death by mandating First Information Report (FIR) registration for every infant-related incident and rigorous forensic and medical examination protocols so that justice reaches even those who never had a name.

Data and accountability: Build a unified national data system that bridges the police, health, and Women and Child Development departments, ensuring transparency and rehabilitation support for the survivors of this collective neglect.

Standardizing these protocols would transform infant protection from a fragmented, charitable initiative into a core governance responsibility.

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The Economist Has Mistaken Incumbents for Markets

Evidence of the kind that requires no expert to score a country has since accumulated. Melissa Dell's study of the Peruvian mita compares households across the boundary of a forced-labor conscription system that ran from 1573 to 1812. The line cut through continuous terrain, with the same peoples and the same colonial administration on either side. Consumption today is roughly 25 % lower on the conscripted side and childhood stunting is higher by about six percentage points, with the persistence running through land tenure, public goods and integration into road networks.

The Economist recently attacked economist Daron Acemoglu in a defense of markets. Yet his views mirror thinkers like Adam Smith and George Stigler: incumbents leverage state power to block market entry. Distorted tax policies tilt AI toward worker displacement, proving that defending powerful incumbents threatens capitalism itself.

The famed capitalist thinker Adam Smith's quarrel was never with government as such. It was with a particular arrangement between government and established business, under which charters, monopolies, navigation acts and guild restrictions were maintained in the name of national prosperity and to the profit of those who had lobbied for them. Merchants of the same trade, he observed, rarely gather without the conversation ending in a conspiracy against the public and the mischief he identified was not that they conspired but that the state so reliably obliged them. The Wealth of Nations is, among other things, a catalogue of rent extraction.

I mention this because The Economist has recently taken aim at Daron Acemoglu (a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor and economist) in what the magazine evidently understands to be a defense of markets and because it is not one. Acemoglu called the piece a hit job. I am less interested in his standing than in two claims the article treats as discredited because of its association with him. Both concern entry and competition. Both belong to the liberal tradition rather than to its critics. On both, the magazine has ended up defending not the market order but the parties currently sitting inside it.

What extractive institutions extract

An extractive institution is an arrangement in which those who profit from barriers to entry use politics to enforce them: Property is secure for insiders and precarious for everyone else, entry is conditional on permission and courts respond to whoever already holds the charter. Inclusive institutions are its negation. They are not a program of redistribution. They are the absence of a standing veto over new entrants.



ALI OMAR FOROZISH

Ali Omar Forozish is a libertarian thinker, economist and the author of Synthesis: The Symbiosis of Human Beings and AI and Capitalism: The Economy of Freedom.

Begin with the sovereign, because the sovereign is the limiting case. A ruler who needs capital would prefer to borrow cheaply and repay when convenient; lenders, anticipating exactly this, charge accordingly or decline altogether. The ruler is thus worse off for his own unlimited discretion and he cannot repair the problem by promising, since discretion is precisely what permits him to break promises.

The American economists and political scientists Douglass North and Barry Weingast read the English settlement of 1688 as the solution to this bind: Parliamentary control over revenue and courts the Crown could not simply override, made royal commitments credible and the state's borrowing costs fell in consequence. Nothing about English capital or English enterprise changed in that decade. What changed was that the largest potential expropriator in the kingdom had been tied down and the capital markets priced the difference.

The same logic runs downward, because rulers are not the only parties capable of closing an economy. The famed economist and Nobel Prize winner George Stigler's account of regulatory capture supplies the mechanism by which private closure is achieved: as a general matter, he argued, regulation is acquired by the industry it governs and operated for that industry's benefit, because producers have concentrated interests and consumers have diffuse ones. The producer knows precisely what a licensing requirement is worth to him and can afford the lobbyist; the consumer bears a cost too small to notice individually and too large in aggregate.

This is not a theory about corrupt officials. It is a theory about the asymmetry of stakes, and it predicts that protection will be sought by those best positioned to obtain it, using the state as the instrument of a private restraint of trade.

That the resulting theory is not circular can be demonstrated rather than asserted, because it generated a prediction that could have failed. In 2002, Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson documented a reversal of fortune: Among territories Europeans colonized, the places that were prosperous and densely populated in 1500 - Mesoamerica, the Andes, Mughal India - are the poor places today, while the thinly settled territories became rich. Geography does not move. No explanation resting on climate or terrain can generate an inversion of the ranking. The institutional explanation can be dense and productive populations were worth organizing for extraction, while empty ones offered nothing to extract, obliging settlers to secure their own property instead. The claim was exposed to refutation and it held.

Evidence of the kind that requires no expert to score a country has since accumulated. Melissa Dell's study of the Peruvian mita compares households across the boundary of a forced-labor conscription system that ran from 1573 to 1812. The line cut through continuous terrain, with the same peoples and the same colonial administration on either side. Consumption today is roughly 25 % lower on the conscripted side and childhood stunting is higher by about six percentage points, with the persistence running through land tenure, public goods and integration into road networks. Nathan Nunn's work on the African slave trades finds a comparable long shadow. Neither depends on a perception index compiled by analysts who already knew the answer.

The literature is not monolithic in discussing this matter. Stelios Michalopoulos and Elias Papaioannou (two Greek economists and professors), comparing ethnic homelands partitioned by colonial borders, find that differences in national institutions across those borders do not systematically produce differences in local development. Their result suggests that the operative margin in much of Africa is local rather than national - that what matters is the institution actually governing the village, not the flag over the capital. That refines the thesis. It does not rescue the alternative, since the alternative was that institutions do not matter at all.

The theory's sharpest implication is the one most relevant to the present dispute: rulers and incumbents will obstruct productive innovation when the innovation threatens their position. The Habsburg and Russian states resisted railways; Ottoman authorities restricted printing for the better part of three centuries. These were not failures of imagination but accurate assessments, by men who understood their own circumstances, of what mobility and literacy would do to them. Creative destruction is a phrase that flatters the creation and understates who does the destroying. Incumbents notice.

Intellectual honesty requires naming the defeat condition. Extractive regimes can certainly grow; the Soviet Union managed four decades of it by moving peasants into factories and China has done something structurally similar at greater scale.

The claim is narrower: that such regimes cannot sustain innovation-led growth at the frontier, because frontier growth requires permitting the displacement of whoever is currently powerful. Should China reach frontier income per head under unconstrained single-party rule, the framework is not merely embarrassed but refuted and those of us persuaded by it will owe an accounting. What has occurred instead - the interventions against Ant Group, against Didi, against the private tutoring sector - is the predicted behavior in daylight.

OPINION

DTM



CHINIOT: City kids turn old tyres into toys on the street. ONLINE

Letters To The EDITOR

Balochi deserves its rightful place

Language is not simply a means of communication; it is an important part of a nation's identity, history and culture. It carries the stories of ancestors, traditions, poetry and values that are passed from one generation to another. When a language is neglected, a community risks losing an important part of its cultural heritage. Balochi is one such language that deserves greater recognition, support and opportunities for development. Across the world, languages are promoted through education, literature, research, media and government policies. English has gained international importance because of its widespread use in education, science, trade and technology. Russian and many other languages are also taught and promoted through schools, universities and cultural institutions. Even languages spoken by smaller communities receive attention through efforts to preserve their literature and teach them to younger generations. This shows that a language does not need millions of speakers to deserve protection and respect.

Unfortunately, Balochi has not received the attention it deserves in Pakistan, particularly in educational institutions and official spaces. It has a rich tradition of poetry, storytelling and oral literature, yet many children who speak Balochi at home never get the opportunity to properly read or write it at school. This creates a gap between everyday use of the language and its development as an educational and literary subject.

The government of Balochistan should take serious steps to introduce Balochi into schools. Children should be given opportunities to study their mother tongue through proper textbooks, trained teachers and a well-planned curriculum. Universities and research institutions should also support Balochi literature, preserve historical material and encourage new writers.

Its promotion should not remain limited to educational institutions. Government notices, road signs, public information boards, television programmes, radio broadcasts and digital platforms can help increase its use in everyday life. Local authorities can also display place names in Balochi alongside Urdu and English. Such measures would send a positive message that the language is valued and respected.

MUHAMMAD NASEER
Turbat

Caught between smog and indifference

Every November, Punjab wakes up beneath the same grey sky, yet the arrival of smog continues to catch authorities seemingly unprepared. Despite repeated warnings about hazardous air quality, children are still expected to attend schools, participate in outdoor assemblies and take part in sports activities while breathing polluted air. In towns across the province, students walk to school without protective masks, while parents face an uncomfortable choice between sending their children into unhealthy conditions and keeping them home at a time when examinations are approaching.

This is not merely an educational challenge; it is a public health emergency that demands an immediate and coordinated response. Children are particularly vulnerable to air pollution because their lungs are still developing.

Prolonged exposure can aggravate respiratory problems, trigger persistent coughing and contribute to other health complications. A cough that begins during the smog season can continue for weeks, affecting children's attendance, concentration and overall well-being. It is therefore difficult to understand why educational institutions continue to operate as though the weather presents no extraordinary danger.

The Punjab Education Department must move beyond occasional advisories and introduce a clear, province-wide smog policy for schools. Such a policy should establish specific thresholds for shifting outdoor activities indoors, reducing school hours and temporarily closing institutions when air quality reaches dangerous levels. Decisions should be communicated to parents and schools the evening before, rather than announced early in the morning when children are already travelling. Government schools, particularly those serving low-income communities, should also be provided with protective masks. A simple colour-coded air quality alert system, communicated directly to school administrations, could help principals make timely decisions without waiting for lengthy official instructions.

ASIM RAZA
Gujranwala

Humans and Machines Shaping the Future Together — Part 1

The author explores the concept of cybernetic cities and businesses, with Saudi Arabia's NEOM serving as the primary case study. In the author's vision of the future, cities are intelligently monitored and responded to around the clock, with AI, sensors, autonomous vehicles, drones, and digital networks looking after them. Unlike traditional cities, which are more or less permanent and planned by humans, cybernetic cities would be adaptive systems.

The Cybernetic Society: How Humans and Machines Will Shape the Future Together, by Amir Husain, examines the convergence of artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, sensors, networks, and human decision-making to create a cybernetic society in the contemporary world. The book was published in August 2025 by Basic Books, and it uses cybernetics as its central organising framework.

Amir Husain's The Cybernetic Society examines how artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, and human cognition are merging into interconnected cybernetic systems that reshape cities, businesses, warfare, and governance. Drawing on case studies like NEOM, brain-computer interfaces, and drone warfare, Husain explores the tension between technological efficiency and centralized surveillance. While occasionally speculative, the book argues that safeguarding human agency requires decentralization, adaptive governance, and open-source technologies to ensure technology empowers rather than controls society.



ABDUL WASSAY

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The Cybernetic Society: How Humans and Machines Will Shape the Future Together, by Amir Husain, examines the convergence of artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, sensors, networks, and human decision-making to create a cybernetic society in the contemporary world. The book was published in August 2025 by Basic Books, and it uses cybernetics as its central organising framework.

Amir Husain is a technologist, entrepreneur, programmer, and investor who has worked extensively in the field of AI and autonomous systems for a long time. In 2013, he founded an AI company that reached a valuation of 1.4 billion USD. He also worked on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) with senior military, government, and corporate industry leaders. Husain also served on the board of the University of Texas, US.Learn AI Tools

According to the author, cybernetics is the science of the control and communication of complex systems. The core of Husain's argument is that man and machine are converging to build interdisciplinary cybernetic systems that are changing society. He believes that this change is already happening and will alter the way cognition is understood, organisations function, cities are built, wars are fought, and politics is decided. The real problem is how humans are able to lead this technological shift to increasing empowerment and freedom, rather than focusing on power and control.Political analysis subscription

The book starts with a central idea: the connection between code, consciousness, and control, which Husain uses as the basis of the new cybernetic society. He claims that software has already transcended the computer and is becoming part of physical systems, organisations, and daily life. What is seen, remembered, and decided, and what is believed, is determined by a smartphone, algorithms, and AI. The model of transformation developed by cybernetics is relevant to the understanding of this transformation because it involves communication, feedback, adaptation, and control. Husain's main argument is that humans and machines are becoming a seamless part of the same systems and that they are producing effects through a process of ongoing interaction. To explain this, the author divides his book into 5 broad themes.

The book examines the origins of cybernetics and the contributions of Norbert Wiener and Arturo Rosenblueth. Husain discusses Wiener's attempts to portray biological and mechanical systems through feedback and the intellectual context of cybernetics with regard to earlier thought on control and governance. Wiener's work on anti-aircraft systems during World War II is presented by Husain as an important link between robotics, AI, information theory, and cybernetics. According to Husain, AI and cybernetics are closely related because they both focus on information processing, decision-making, and intelligent behaviours. Finally, he depicts modern society as a growing cybernetic organism in which sensors gather information, machines and humans respond to it, and those responses provide new information.

The author explores the concept of cybernetic cities and businesses, with Saudi Arabia's NEOM serving as the primary case study. In the author's vision of the future, cities are intelligently monitored and responded to around the clock, with AI, sensors, autonomous vehicles, drones, and digital networks looking after them. Unlike traditional cities, which are more or less permanent and planned by humans, cybernetic cities would be adaptive systems. Smart contracts and decentralised autonomous organisations could facilitate resource management and administrative tasks. Neom is thus offered not just as a development of the city but as an experiment in combining the human and the machine in decision-making. Husain also proposes that such cities can be economies of knowledge and power.

The author then moves on to the use of cybernetics in businesses and economic organisations. He refers to the research of Geoffrey West, who studied how city and corporation growth patterns are alike and why companies eventually reach limits due to the slower velocity of information flow within expanding hierarchies. He used the example of Nvidia, which focuses on simplicity and fast communications. According to the author, the key to a successful company is having effective feedback loops and adapting to environmental shifts. AI and robotics can support this process by enabling an organisation to gather information, analyse it, and then make changes to its processes before humans can.

COP31 and the US' Climate Divide — Part I

Northern Virginia, one of the world's largest data-center hubs, is already straining its power infrastructure. In response, states are considering or adopting a range of measures. New York has paused new data center projects pending environmental reviews; Texas has temporarily frozen new grid permits; and Colorado and Minnesota are requiring companies to secure new clean-energy supplies and limit drinking-water use for cooling. Georgia, Virginia and South Carolina have also changed electricity-rate rules to prevent households from bearing the cost of infrastructure built for major technology companies.

The growing divide between federal climate policy and state-led efforts to reduce emissions in the US shapes its presence at the 31st UN Climate Change Conference in Türkiye. Complicating these efforts, the rapid expansion of AI-driven data centers is straining energy and water resources. The summit must establish safeguards that align technological growth with climate goals while protecting communities and households.



LUIZ VILLARES

Luiz Villares is an environmentalist and project expert with 20 years experience in the Amazon

The 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) is currently taking place in Antalya, Türkiye, from November 9-20. Governments meeting under the UN climate framework will continue the lengthy discussion on how to advance global climate action and implement existing commitments, amid ever-growing climate disasters and the breaking of planetary limits.

The summit comes as the United States faces a widening divide between federal climate policy and state-level efforts to reduce emissions. At the same time, the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence and cloud computing is driving up electricity demand, raising questions about how the country can meet its energy needs while staying on track with climate goals.

Over the past decade, US greenhouse gas emissions averaged 6.59 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) equivalent annually from 2017 to 2019, during President Donald Trump's first term, before falling to 5.98 billion tons in 2020, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The drop coincided with COVID-19's effects on travel and economic activity. Under President Joe Biden, annual gross emissions were about 6.2-6.4 billion tons, peaking in 2022 before declining to 5.91 billion in 2024.

Since Trump returned to office, the federal government has used executive and legislative actions to hinder the energy transition and promote fossil fuel production and use. A preliminary estimate shows emissions rose 2.4% in 2025. The EPA's 2025 inventory is not expected until 2027, reflecting the administration's disregard for climate-policy disclosure. The EPA also revoked the Endangerment Finding, the legal basis for regulating greenhouse gases, and eliminated federal minimum emissions standards for power plants and automobiles.

A widening gap between Washington and the states

Both international and domestic action under the second Trump administration has shifted sharply, as the US federal government stepped back from the Paris Agreement and other federal commitments to renewable energy policies and financing. The move reversed Biden's re-entry and echoed Trump's decision during his first term.

The federal retreat has left states and cities to shoulder more of the climate-policy burden. The US Climate Alliance - a bipartisan coalition of 24 governors formed in response to the first withdrawal in 2017 - has become a prominent vehicle for state-level action. As federal protections are rolled back, state governments are advancing climate policies, often linking emissions cuts to lower energy bills, greater reliability and job creation.

The US Climate Alliance reports that its member states have reduced net greenhouse gas emissions by 24% below 2005 levels while growing their combined GDP by 34%. Illinois, for example, enacted a law to expand battery storage, helping stabilize electricity prices and support a cleaner grid. Massachusetts has announced plans to procure additional clean energy and storage, while New Jersey has expanded community solar, offering bill discounts to participating low-income households. In Washington, a new state authority will help plan and finance transmission infrastructure, and Virginia is advancing measures to expand solar, storage and virtual power plants.

States are also targeting emissions from transportation, buildings and industry. Texas is expanding its electric vehicle fast-charging network, while California and New York are considering rules to curb truck pollution linked to large warehouses. Maryland and Washington are weighing transportation plans that would account for greenhouse gas emissions and promote alternatives to highway expansion. In buildings, Maine has expanded heat-pump use to reduce reliance on heating oil, and Virginia is piloting programs to help households make energy-saving upgrades. Pennsylvania is directing grants toward industrial decarbonization, while Washington, California and other states are supporting cleaner manufacturing.

Many of these measures remain proposals or are still being implemented, but together they show how states are pursuing emissions reductions alongside economic and public-health benefits.

States seek a role at COP31

The federal government's retreat and the technology sector's rapid growth are shaping the US presence at COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye. The federal government has a limited role, focusing on monitoring discussions that affect US commercial interests rather than joining international climate-finance commitments.

Democratic members of Congress participate separately, along with state officials, positioning themselves through the US Climate Alliance, highlighting state and local climate action, and engaging with international partners; however, they cannot vote on behalf of the United States or sign treaties for the federal government.

The states' alliance teams its efforts with America Is All In - the largest US subnational climate coalition - which unites states, cities, businesses and institutions representing 63% of the population and 74% of the country's GDP.

Overall, according to Climate Action Tracker projections, US emissions could be about 14% lower by 2030 under pro-climate federal policies similar to those Biden considered in his last year in office. Among the top contributors to US emissions are the booming data center installations.

AI's growing footprint: energy, water, copper and concrete

The rapid expansion of data centers for AI and cloud computing is making future energy and water use hard to predict. One concern is already clear: Facilities can be built faster than the power plants and transmission networks needed to serve them. Some have extended coal-plant operations or relied more on natural gas, while renewable projects face permitting and grid delays. It is a big issue. The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory projects that data centers could account for 11.8% of US electricity consumption by 2030.

Northern Virginia, one of the world's largest data-center hubs, is already straining its power infrastructure. In response, states are considering or adopting a range of measures. New York has paused new data center projects pending environmental reviews; Texas has temporarily frozen new grid permits; and Colorado and Minnesota are requiring companies to secure new clean-energy supplies and limit drinking-water use for cooling. Georgia, Virginia and South Carolina have also changed electricity-rate rules to prevent households from bearing the cost of infrastructure built for major technology companies. Some of these measures include surcharges of up to 15% for technology firms.

Beyond energy issues, the expansion also carries a high cost. Data centers consume hundreds of thousands of tons of copper, which is becoming increasingly difficult to extract: the amount found in a ton of mined rock has fallen from about 50 kilograms to less than 10, and new mines can take more than two decades to become productive. The result could be a widening gap between demand and supply, along with greater environmental damage from mining.

Construction adds another burden, particularly through the concrete used to build these facilities. Solutions include AI-assisted concrete design, which could cut emissions by up to 40%, and companies developing lower-carbon or carbon-free cement. These advances are promising, but they do not address the central concern: Environmental impacts are already growing, while many remedies are still being tested.

NATIONAL DTM

Zardari seeks stronger technological, trade links with Portugal



President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday stressed the need to further strengthen Pakistan-Portugal relations through enhanced cooperation in trade, investment, agriculture, labour mobility, renewable energy, education, technology and parliamentary exchanges.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Portugal's Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, Paulo Rangel, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The president said Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Portugal as an important partner within the European Union and saw considerable opportunities for expanding bilateral cooperation across various sectors.

Emphasising the need to diversify bilateral trade beyond traditional textile products, President Zardari identified agriculture, processed food, pharmaceuticals, engineering, sports goods and information technology services as promising areas for expanding commercial ties.

He proposed establishing a Pakistan-Portugal Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment to address existing trade barriers, identify new business opportunities and facilitate stronger commercial engagement between the two countries.

The president also highlighted the potential for expanding cooperation in education, research, technology and sports through university partnerships, faculty and student exchanges, and collaboration between technology institutions and innovation incubators.

Welcoming the partnership between FC Porto and Sialkot Football Academy, he encouraged further exchanges in coaching, youth tournaments and professional training programmes to promote sporting cooperation.

On agricultural collaboration, President Zardari expressed hope for the early finalisation of the proposed memorandum of understanding (MoU) and the establishment of a bilateral technical working group to identify practical areas of cooperation.

He also appreciated Portugal's continued support for Pakistan's GSP+ status and called for further cooperation to ensure the welfare, integration, consular access and protection of the rights of the Pakistani community living in Portugal.

The president congratulated Portugal on its election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the term beginning January 1, 2027, and expressed his best wishes for a successful tenure.

Speaking during the meeting, Paulo Rangel described relations between Pakistan and Portugal as excellent, saying both countries shared goodwill that should be translated into stronger economic, cultural and institutional cooperation.

He noted that more than 60,000 Pakistanis were living in Portugal and were well integrated into Portuguese society. He also highlighted the growing educational links between the two countries, revealing that more than 600 Pakistani students were currently studying in Portugal, with dozens benefiting from Portuguese scholarships.

The Portuguese foreign minister informed President Zardari that Portugal's agriculture minister would visit Pakistan in the near future to explore opportunities for cooperation in the agricultural sector.

The Portuguese delegation included Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan Paulo Domingues, Deputy Director-General for Foreign Policy Ana Coelho and Diplomatic Adviser to the Minister Filipe Ramalho Ortigao.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Senator Sherry Rehman, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla and the Foreign Secretary also attended the meeting.

The discussions reflected the shared commitment of Pakistan and Portugal to expanding bilateral relations, strengthening economic partnerships and promoting closer people-to-people and institutional contacts. NEWS DESK

Bangladesh Speaker's visit to revive historic ties

At the invitation of Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, Hafiz Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram, will undertake a six-day official visit to Pakistan, commencing on Monday. Accompanied by a high-level parliamentary delegation, this is the first-ever visit to Pakistan by a Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, according to a press release issued by the National Assembly Secretariat.

The visit of the Bangladeshi parliamentary delegation marks an important step towards further strengthening the historic, cultural, and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh and exploring new avenues of cooperation at the parliamentary level.

It is expected to promote mutual trust, understanding, institutional engagement, and people-to-people contacts between the two countries.

Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament Hafiz Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram is a graduate of the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA). He has expressed his desire to visit his alma mater, where he will be welcomed by his former course mates currently serving in the Pakistan Army.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to renew professional and academic associations and revisit cherished memories.

Speaker Hafiz Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram also represented Pakistan as captain of its national football team in1968. These historical and professional associations reflect the shared past and longstanding connections between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The delegation also includes Jaharat Ara Chowdhury, who was recently elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). During the IPU session, the Pakistani parliamentary delegation, led by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, extended strong support to her candidature and undertook effective diplomatic and parliamentary engagements to facilitate her election. Pakistan's support reflected its commitment to promoting cooperation, mutual respect, and friendly relations at the inter-parliamentary level.

The Bangladeshi parliamentary delegation also includes Hamam Qadir Chowdhury, grandson of former Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly, A.K.M. Fazlul Quader Choudhury. He served as Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly from November 29, 1963, to June 12, 1965. He holds an important place in Pakistan's parliamentary history. Hamam Qadir Chowdhury's inclusion in the delegation adds a distinctive historical dimension to the visit.

The visit of the Bangladeshi parliamentary delegation at the invitation of Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq reflects the serious efforts being made by both countries to promote parliamentary diplomacy and strengthen bilateral relations on renewed foundations.

The visit is opening new avenues for restoring engagement and fostering closer ties between the two brotherly countries, which share historical, cultural and longstanding connections.

During the visit, the Bangladeshi parliamentary delegation will call on the President of Pakistan, the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Senate, various parliamentary forums and Members of Parliament.

The meetings are expected to cover bilateral relations, parliamentary cooperation, the exchange of legislative experiences, and regional and international issues of mutual interest. NEWS DESK

Lawmakers to declare assets by Dec 31: ECP



The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has directed all members of both houses of the parliament and provincial assemblies to submit details of their assets and liabilities, including those of their spouses and dependent family members, for the financial year 2025-26 by December 31, warning that failure to meet the deadline could lead to suspension of their membership.

According to a statement issued by the ECP on Monday, all members of the National Assembly, Senate and provincial assemblies are required to file their annual declarations under Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017.

The declarations must be submitted on Form B and include details of assets and liabilities owned by lawmakers, their spouses and dependent family members.

The commission said it would publish on January 1, 2027, a list of lawmakers who had failed to submit their statements by the prescribed deadline.

Members who fail to file their declarations by January 15, 2027, will face suspension of their membership and will remain barred from participating in proceedings of parliament or their respective provincial assemblies until the required statements are submitted.

The ECP also warned that it would take action within 120 days against lawmakers found to have provided incorrect information in their asset declarations. The requirement is aimed at ensuring compliance with the law and strengthening transparency and accountability in the financial disclosures of elected representatives. NEWS DESK

Punjab boards to adopt digital marking system



The Punjab government has introduced a digital on-screen marking system with facial recognition to check examination papers in an effort to modernise the process and improve transparency across the province's nine boards for intermediate and secondary education. Under the system, students' handwritten answer scripts will be scanned using advanced scanners and uploaded to a digital platform, where examiners assess them online through a real-time dashboard.

Punjab Minister for School and Higher Education Rana Sikandar Hayat announced the initiative in a post on X on Sunday, saying facial recognition technology would be used to verify examiners' identities.

The system will automatically lock if it detects more than one face or the presence of an unauthorised person during the marking process, Hayat said.

He said artificial intelligence and digital monitoring would help make the examination process more transparent, secure and efficient.

The chairman of the Lahore Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dr Badar, said the digital marking system was being implemented in the ongoing second annual examinations across Punjab.

He said officials of the Lahore board had developed the system and shared its technology and software with other education boards in the province to facilitate its implementation.

The Lahore board had also provided training to staff of other boards to enable them to operate the system, he added.

Dr Badar said the system would also be used in the next annual examinations, with all science subjects to be assessed through the digital platform.

He said the board was taking steps to modernise the system and make the entire examination and assessment process more transparent.

Under the digital assessment framework, answer scripts can be divided into individual questions or portions and assigned to different subject specialists.

This allows multiple examiners to assess different answers in the same script instead of one examiner checking the entire paper.

The system is also intended to bring greater uniformity to marking through standardised assessment criteria and digital monitoring of examiners.

Other measures outlined under the programme include biometric verification of candidates, digital attendance management, security features in question papers and changes to the assessment of practical examinations.

The government also plans to expand digital marking to major science subjects, including physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics and computer science, at matriculation and intermediate levels.

The reforms are aimed at reducing inconsistencies in manual marking, strengthening accountability and ensuring that students' performance is assessed through a more standardised process, according to Dr Badar.

Earlier this year, it was reported that students appearing in the 2026 matriculation and intermediate exams in Punjab would be verified through digital biometric attendance, a first in the province, aimed at eliminating impersonation and strengthening transparency. NEWS DESK

Supply gas to areas where its produced: Senate panel

A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Petroleum and Gas was held at the Sindh Secretariat in Karachi under the chairmanship of Senator Jam Saifullah Khan Dharejo to review issues concerning petroleum and natural gas production, local communities' rights and development in resource-rich areas.

The meeting was attended by heads of oil and gas companies, representatives of relevant stakeholders, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners and senior officials of concerned departments.

Addressing the meeting, Senator Jam Saifullah Dharejo emphasised that communities living in areas where petroleum and natural gas are extracted must receive direct benefits from these natural resources. He stressed that people residing in resource-rich regions should not remain deprived of basic facilities while natural resources from their areas contribute to the country's economy.

He particularly called for the immediate provision of natural gas to villages located near gas-producing districts of Sindh, including Ghotki, Khairpur and Nara. He directed the relevant authorities to formulate a practical and effective strategy for extending gas connections to communities that are still without this essential facility.

The committee chairman said that ensuring access to gas for local populations was an important step towards addressing the concerns of communities living in areas that contribute significantly to the country's energy resources. He urged the concerned departments and gas companies to take concrete measures to resolve the issue and improve living conditions in these areas.



During the meeting, Senator Dharejo also announced the establishment of a vocational training centre in Ghotki with the support of Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL). He said the proposed centre would provide technical and vocational training to local youth, enabling them to acquire professional skills and access better employment opportunities.

The initiative is aimed at strengthening the capacity of young people in the region and ensuring that local communities can benefit from employment opportunities associated with the oil and gas sector and other industries.

The meeting also reviewed several important issues relating to gas royalties, the rights of communities in petroleum and natural gas-producing areas, and the provision of development facilities in these regions. Participants discussed the need for greater coordination between oil and gas companies, government departments and district administrations to address local concerns and ensure that communities receive their due benefits.

Senator Aini Mari and other members of the Senate committee, along with senior officials of relevant departments, also attended the meeting.

The committee's deliberations highlighted the importance of linking natural resource development with local welfare, improved public services and employment generation, particularly in areas that contribute to Pakistan's energy production. NEWS DESK

NATIONAL

Govt decides to rename Imran Khan stadium

The government has decided to rename Peshawar's Imran Khan Cricket Stadium and restore its former name, Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium.

According to private TV channel, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said the stadium's name was being changed and that it would not be named after a personality from any political party. During the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government's previous tenure, Peshawar's Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium was renamed Imran Khan Cricket Stadium, a change approved by the provincial cabinet.

Sources said the current administration decided to change the stadium's name after the imposition of governor's rule and issued instructions to the Sports Department. A final decision has not yet been made on the new name.

Sources said the name would be changed before the Pakistan Super League. In response to a query, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said the Imran Khan Stadium would be renamed. He said Arbab Niaz was a personality from the province who had contributed to sports, but added that the stadium would not be named after a Pakistan Peoples Party personality. INP

Ahsan says Pakistani astronaut to make history



Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday arrived in Jiuyuguan, China, as part of preparations for Pakistan's first historic space mission, marking a significant milestone in the country's space exploration journey.

The minister said Pakistan's first astronaut would make history by becoming the first foreign guest aboard the Chinese space station, opening a new chapter in the country's history.

He said two Pakistani astronauts had successfully completed specialised training in China for the landmark mission, while one of them would be selected for the historic spaceflight. Ahsan Iqbal said the spaceflight by a Pakistani astronaut would mark the beginning of a new era of Pakistan-China space cooperation.

He said the mission would not only be a major milestone in Pakistan's space history but also serve as a new symbol of the two countries' ironclad friendship and scientific and technological cooperation. The minister further said the historic mission reflected Pakistan's national scientific capabilities and represented an important step towards exploring new opportunities in space research. NEWS DESK

Another Rs 3 per litre cut in petrol price

The government on Monday reduced the price of petrol by Rs3 per litre while keeping that of diesel unchanged at Rs357 per litre, after snapping a 12-day streak of consecutive reductions in the rate of petrol the previous week. Following the revision, petrol will retail at Rs319 per litre on Nov 24 (Tuesday), according to a notification by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra). The government continues to levy Rs114 per litre in taxes and duties on petrol and Rs100 per litre on diesel.

Under an arrangement announced on Nov 2, for 30 days, oil refineries will contribute to the petroleum levy by bearing a cumulative impact of Rs15 billion, according to the government. This allows a Rs14.71 reduction in the petrol price at the consumer end. NEWS DESK

Opposition leaders vow not to let Imran meet Bhutto's fate

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, lawyer for the PTI founder, said a separate legal communication had been sent to ensure implementation of the Supreme Court's decision regarding Imran Khan's transfer to Shifa International Hospital. He said letters had been addressed to the Supreme Court, the Judicial Commission and the Islamabad High Court, seeking intervention over what he described as delays in Imran Khan's case.

Chaudhry added that copies of Barrister Salman Safdar's letter and a petition filed by Uzma Khan had also been attached to the correspondence. He said the communication was aimed at securing the constitutional and legal rights of the PTI founder, adding that it was not merely a letter but effectively a petition seeking intervention from the country's judicial authorities.

The letter also urged that a court officer or local commission be appointed to oversee and report on compliance within seven days; that the pending contempt petition, appeals and applications be fixed for urgent hearing while holding those who "defeated" the Aug 18 order to account; and that the federal government be directed to bring Imran and Bushra's detention conditions into conformity with Pakistan's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the Convention against Torture. "Every day that the court's order remains unimplemented diminishes the authority of the court and the promise of Article 9 and every day it is noticed far beyond our borders," the letter stressed. "If harm comes to Imran or to Bushra Bibi in state custody, the responsibility will rest on the state, but history will also ask what the courts did when they were told, in plain words, by the elected representatives of the people in both Houses of Parliament, that a life was at risk."

Imran has been in prison since August 2023. The IHC has allowed him twice-a-week meetings - on Tuesdays and Thursdays - with his family, lawyers and other associates. But despite multiple court directives, the PTI founder has been restricted from meeting visitors. Concerns about his health have also arisen in the past year, with the PTI demanding he be given medical treatment by his personal physicians, a demand as yet unheeded by the government. NEWS DESK

Double wheat, flour supply to stabilise prices

Maryam says profiteers won't be allowed to operate freely



Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday directed authorities to double the supply of wheat and flour across the province to bring down prices and ensure the availability of the essential commodity at affordable rates.

Chairing a special meeting, the chief minister expressed serious concern over the rising prices of flour and instructed the relevant departments to take immediate steps to stabilise the market and provide relief to consumers.

She directed authorities to launch a crackdown against flour sellers charging excessive prices three days after the supply is doubled, warning that profiteers and elements exploiting consumers would not be allowed to operate freely.

The meeting also considered a proposal to fix a maximum retail price for flour to prevent arbitrary increases and ensure effective market regulation.

Maryam Nawaz assigned the relevant departments the responsibility of controlling flour prices and ordered strict monitoring of wheat and flour supplies and their distribution across the province.

"Flour price mafias will not be allowed to act arbitrarily," she said, reaffirming the government's commitment to ensuring affordable wheat and flour for the people under all circumstances.

Separately, the chief minister directed the introduction of a QR code-based complaint and monitoring system for cleanliness services across Punjab under the Suthra Punjab programme.

Under the proposed system, citizens will be able to scan QR codes displayed at different locations to obtain information about sanitation workers assigned to their areas, register complaints and provide feedback on cleanliness arrangements.

Chairing another special meeting to review the Suthra Punjab programme, Maryam Nawaz instructed officials to ensure that complaints relating to sanitation were addressed within a few hours.

She also directed the installation of dustbins at appropriate locations and called for public awareness campaigns to encourage rural residents to dispose of waste in designated containers. The meeting agreed to conduct cleanliness operations in villages twice a week.

The chief minister reviewed a proposal to link the salaries of Suthra Punjab officers with their performance and directed authorities to ensure adequate availability of sanitation workers and machinery throughout the province.

She ordered daily deep cleaning of one tehsil and instructed officials to achieve the door-to-door waste collection target at the earliest. She also called for the use of modern machinery to remove weeds and bushes along roadsides, stressing that urban and rural areas should receive equal attention.

"Cleanliness in cities and villages is equally important, as sanitation is something visible to everyone," she remarked, adding that the government was working to overcome challenges in maintaining cleanliness across the province.

Maryam Nawaz directed authorities to ensure the visible presence of anti-littering squads in every district and impose fines on individuals repeatedly dumping garbage in streets and drains.

She further ordered the identification of additional designated waste disposal sites and installation of dustbins and waste containers in commercial markets. Proper waste management arrangements were also directed for roadside vending markets.

The chief minister called for frequent surprise inspections to check sanitation conditions, workers' attendance and the operational efficiency of cleaning machinery. She also instructed the provincial minister for local government to personally conduct field inspections.

During the meeting, officials briefed the chief minister on the availability of sanitation workers and machinery in Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Layyah, Muzaffargarh and Kot Addu. Arrangements in Gujranwala, Sialkot, Narowal, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Multan, Vehari, Lodhran, Khanewal, Faisalabad, Jhang, Chiniot and Toba Tek Singh were also reviewed.

The meeting was informed that more than 93,000 sanitation beats had been established across Punjab under the Suthra Punjab programme.

Officials further reported that over 51,000 vacant plots had been identified across the province, of which garbage had been cleared from 30,000. The target of disbursing salaries to all Suthra Punjab workers across Punjab had also been achieved.

The meeting was also informed that 8,376 drains, spanning a combined length of 7,843 kilometres, had been cleaned across the province.

The initiatives are aimed at improving sanitation services, strengthening public participation in waste management and ensuring better cleanliness standards in both urban and rural communities. NEWS DESK

Gilani urges youth to play role in economic development



Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani has stressed the need for talented, responsible and forward-looking professionals to strengthen the country's economy and contribute to a prosperous future.

He was addressing the 36th convocation of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Pakistan (ICMA) in Multan late Sunday night.

Gilani said success was measured not merely by academic qualifications but also by integrity, professional ethics and positive contributions to society.

He noted that the year held special significance as ICMA was celebrating 75 years of its establishment in 1951, acknowledging its contribution to developing skilled accountants who had played an important role in Pakistan's corporate sector, industry, financial management and economic development.

He described the diamond jubilee as a tribute to the institution's longstanding commitment to education, professional integrity and nation-building.

The chairman senate appreciated ICMA Pakistan President Muhammad Yasin and his team for promoting professional education, strengthening the accounting profession and preparing future business leaders.

Congratulating the graduating students, Gilani said the convocation marked not the end of their journey but the beginning of greater responsibilities and opportunities.

He urged them to contribute to national development, saying their greatest achievement would be measured not only by personal success but also by what they gave back to the country.

Earlier, ICMA Pakistan President Muhammad Yasin briefed the participants on the institution's history and contributions to the country.

Vice President ICMA Muhammad Abdul Qayyum, former ICMA chairman Ghulam Mustafa Qazi, Joint Director ICMA Multan Samina Kiani, ICMA Multan Branch Chairman Waqas Khalid and faculty members attended the ceremony.

Gilani also distributed shields and certificates among the graduating students. NEWS DESK

Police submit challan in Hina Javed murder case

A significant development has emerged in the high-profile murder case of Hina Javed, as Rawalpindi Police have submitted the challan (police report) to the Prosecution Branch after completing the investigation and receiving forensic reports.

Following the submission, the District Public Prosecutor has initiated the legal scrutiny of the challan to examine whether all necessary legal requirements have been fulfilled before its presentation before the court.

According to sources in the Prosecution Branch, the District Public Prosecutor has formally received the police report and begun the scrutiny process. The challan could not be received on Saturday due to the unavailability of the District Public Prosecutor.

Sources said the prosecution would carefully examine the documents and evidence submitted by the police. If any legal deficiencies or procedural shortcomings are identified, the challan may be returned to the investigating police officials for necessary corrections.

After completion of the scrutiny process, the challan will be presented before the District and Sessions Judge for further legal proceedings.

According to sources, Rawalpindi Police submitted the challan after obtaining forensic reports and completing the investigation into the murder.

The case was registered at Civil Lines Police Station following the murder of 45-year-old married woman Hina Javed, who was killed at her residence on August 20.

The Punjab Prosecution Department has classified the incident as a high-profile murder case, making the legal examination of the investigation and supporting evidence particularly significant.

Meanwhile, the victim's family has already expressed a lack of confidence in the police investigation, raising concerns about the handling of the case.

Against this backdrop, the scrutiny of the challan by the Prosecution Branch and the subsequent legal proceedings are being closely monitored, with the next stage expected to determine whether the police report fulfils the requirements for submission before the trial court. NEWS DESK

Security official martyred in toll plaza attack in Kohat

A security official identified as Obaidullah, on Monday was martyred in an attack at a toll plaza on the Kohat Indus Highway, according to local reports. The incident occurred at the toll plaza along the Kohat section of the Indus Highway, resulting in the martyrdom of security personnel Obaidullah.

At least five people, including two police personnel were injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast targeting a police vehicle on Land Ahmad Khel Road in Lakki Marwat district on Monday.

According to police, the explosion occurred when a police vehicle of Saddar Police Station was passing through the area. Three civilians were also among the injured.

The injured police personnel were identified as Kamran and Sajjad, while the civilians included Sanaullah, Shafqatullah and Muhammad Zeeshan.

Soon after the incident, Rescue 1122 teams rushed to the scene and shifted the injured to City Hospital Lakki Marwat after providing them with initial medical assistance. The blast caused partial damage to the police van. Further details regarding the nature of the explosion and the circumstances surrounding the incident are awaited.

Meanwhile, three bullet-riddled bodies found in tehsil Domel of Bannu district, police said on Monday. Bodies found at company road in Domel police station jurisdiction," officials said. INP

PHC seeks reports in 15 missing persons cases

The Peshawar High Court (PHC), while hearing 21 petitions relating to missing persons, on Monday sought replies and reports from the relevant authorities in 15 cases, while six petitions were withdrawn.

Justice Ijaz Anwar heard the petitions concerning missing persons and directed the relevant authorities and parties to submit their replies and reports in the cases.

During the proceedings, the court ordered the parties to furnish reports in 15 out of the 21 cases, while six petitions relating to missing persons were withdrawn.

The court also took notice of the difficulties faced by a woman whose husband had allegedly gone missing.

Taking into consideration her journey from Waziristan to Peshawar, the court decided to conduct the next hearing through video link to spare her the hardship of repeated travel.

The decision is being viewed as a facilitative step towards easing the difficulties faced by families of missing persons in pursuing their cases before the court.

After seeking replies and reports in 15 cases, the court adjourned further hearing of the missing persons petitions.

Hearing on Imran's X account

Separately, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday once again granted PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan more time to submit a reply in a petition challenging the X account of the party's founder.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard the petition filed by Advocate Ghulam Murtaza.

During the hearing, PTI's counsel Shamsa Kiyani and Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry appeared before the court. Barrister Gohar also appeared later during the proceedings.

The court granted the PTI chairman further time to submit his reply and adjourned the hearing until December 23. NEWS DESK

BACK PAGE DTM

PM sets Rs 1,000b target for low-cost housing

■ Lifts cap on homes for the poor ■ Tasks banks to meet massive disbursement goal

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday declared that there is no limit on the number of homes the government will build for the poor, vowing to construct millions if needed so that no deserving family is left without a roof over its head, and set an ambitious target of Rs1,000 billion in disbursements under the Apna Ghar Programme over the next six months.

Addressing the ceremony held to mark the milestone of over Rs100 billion in loans reaching citizens under the Apna Ghar Programme, the prime minister said it was a matter of deep concern that while a few enjoy every comfort, a vast number of people are deprived of shelter, education, healthcare and dignified employment.



This, he said, was not the Pakistan envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The prime minister recalled how a visit to a widow's one-room rented home in Lahore, early in his career as a member of the Punjab Assembly, changed him and led to the Ashiana housing schemes in Punjab. The woman, who stitched clothes to feed her children and care for a seriously ill daughter, represented, he said, the reality faced by millions of families.

He said that housing schemes in the past had mostly served the elite, who did not need bank loans, while the real need was among labourers, widows, orphans and low-income families across Pakistan, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. If the state could not provide even a roof to such families, he said, it had no right to rule.

The prime minister said the programme was launched in April 2026. In about six and a half months, he said, banks had disbursed Rs112 billion against loan sanctions of about Rs500 billion. He called this a good start but said the journey ahead is long and must be covered at "lightning speed".

He directed the finance minister, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) governor, the housing minister and the banks to aim for Rs1,000 billion in disbursements in the next six months. He assured them that any hurdles and legal impediments would be removed jointly, without exposing banks to undue risk.

The prime minister said banks had initially been reluctant to enter this segment because of comfortable returns on treasury bills and government deposits. He praised those that came forward and said he was told the scheme was free of corruption and nepotism.

He recalled a beneficiary from Peshawar saying that no one had asked him about his party affiliation, and called this a mark of transparency and merit. He said he had told bankers that even a wrongful recommendation from the prime minister should be reported to him by phone, as the resources belong to the people who deserve them. NEWS DESK

Sindh youth card promises jobs, loans, scholarships

■ Murad hails the launch as a major step toward youth inclusion and empowerment

Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah addressing the launch ceremony Sindh Youth Card at the CM House, described the Sindh Youth Card as much more than a conventional card, calling it a practical commitment to placing young people at the centre of the province's development agenda.

"The future of Sindh and Pakistan depends on the opportunities we create for our young people today. They are not merely the leaders of tomorrow; they are an important force for progress, innovation and technology today," he said.

The Chief Minister said the initiative was designed to remove barriers so that talent, ability and ambition, rather than economic circumstances or social background, determined the opportunities available to young people. "The Sindh Youth Card is a practical expression of our commitment. It is much more than a card; it is a platform of opportunity, inclusion and empowerment," he said. Paying tribute to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Murad Shah said his emphasis on youth development, social justice and equal opportunities had provided the vision and direction for the initiative.

He said the programme would bring together government departments, educational institutions, financial organisations and private-sector partners to establish a comprehensive support system for young people. The Chief Minister urged all provincial departments, public institutions and private organisations to become active partners, stressing that youth empowerment required collective efforts in education, skills development, technology, healthcare, sports and employment. He emphasised that young women, minority communities and persons with disabilities must have equal access to the programme's benefits. "From Karachi to Tharparkar and from Hyderabad to Larkana, every young person must have an equal opportunity to benefit. Geography and financial circumstances should never limit their ambitions," he said.

Shah appreciated Sapphire Consulting Services and JS Bank's Zindigi platform for partnering with the Sindh Government, saying public-private collaboration was essential to translating the initiative into tangible benefits. "The success of the Sindh Youth Card will ultimately be measured not by the number of cards issued, but by the opportunities created, lives improved and aspirations fulfilled," he said.



Six key areas of youth empowerment: Launched through the Sports and Youth Affairs Department in collaboration with Sapphire Consulting Services and JS Bank's Zindigi platform, the Sindh Youth Card has been designed as an integrated support network covering six major areas, beneficiaries will receive access to a Zindigi bank account, digital wallet, mobile banking application and Visa debit card, enabling them to make payments, withdraw cash and receive scholarships, stipends and eligible financial assistance. Discounts and concessions: Cardholders will be able to access special discounts through more than 180 partner businesses in food, retail, fashion, healthcare, education, entertainment, travel and technology. Education and skills development: The programme will facilitate merit- and need-based scholarships, university financial assistance, exchange programmes, digital training, vocational courses and professional certifications.

Transport facilities: Proposed concessions include 20–30 per cent discounts on the People's Bus Service and 20–40 per cent on Pakistan Railways, while domestic airline concessions are planned for a subsequent phase. Employment and entrepreneurship: A dedicated job portal, paid internships, career fairs, corporate placements and business incubation support through the Sindh Enterprise Incubation Centre will connect young people with employment and business opportunities.Financial support: Proposed interest-subsidised microloans ranging from Rs10,000 to Rs500,000 will support eligible young entrepreneurs. Interest-subsidised instalment facilities are also planned for laptops, tablets, smartphones, motorcycles, electric bikes and work equipment.

Speaking on the occasion, Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Sardar Muhammad Bux Khan Mahar described the launch as a historic day for Sindh's youth, saying the initiative was not merely about issuing a card but opening a new gateway to opportunity, empowerment and prosperity. He said that under the leadership of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, the Sindh Government was translating its commitment to youth empowerment into practical opportunities.

Minister Youth Affairs Muhammad Bux Khan Mahar said the programme would cover eligible young people aged 15 to 29 across all 30 districts, irrespective of gender, background or community, with special attention to minorities and persons with disabilities. Mahar said the first phase would distribute 100,000 cards, connecting beneficiaries with scholarships, stipends, fee concessions, professional certifications, digital banking, business discounts, employment opportunities, internships, entrepreneurship support and affordable transport facilities.

"Our message is clear: One Card, One Youth, One Sindh," he said, adding that the objective was to create an integrated support system where education met opportunity, talent met resources and ambition received the support it deserved. In his welcome address, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Munawar Ali Maheser said the Sindh Youth Card had been developed as a unified platform to bring various opportunities and services for the province's young population under one digital identity.

He highlighted the department's efforts to establish partnerships with financial institutions, businesses, educational organisations and other stakeholders to make access to opportunities easier and more organised. The presentation highlighted that Sindh has approximately 13.2 million people in the 15–29 age group, underscoring the importance of investing in youth education, skills and economic participation. The ceremony was attended by provincial ministers, elected representatives, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, provincial secretaries, representatives of financial institutions, civil society members and other distinguished guests. Speaking at the event, CM Murad said the Sindh Youth Card would establish an "effective means of direct engagement" with young people and create a database.

He said that the card had been initially launched for 100,000 young people, with the programme's scope to be expanded over time. "With Sindh's youth population estimated at approximately 13 to 14 million, further measures are being taken, including youth development centres and public-private partnerships, to secure young people's futures while providing them with better opportunities for growth and a supportive environment," the CM said. NEWS DESK

Imran backs new units, claims PTI's Zafar

PTI parliamentary leader in the Senate, Barrister Ali Zafar, on Monday said that Karachi – Pakistan's most populous metropolis – could be made a new province, claiming that party founder and former prime minister Imran Khan was in favour of it.

However, Zafar stressed that it should be done in accordance with the Constitution, as the referendum, albeit constitutional, was only to seek the public's opinion. Days ago, PTI's Information Secretary Sheikh Waqas Akram had dismissed proposals for a referendum as an absurd and futile exercise that could not replace a majority vote or a constitutional bill in the national or provincial assemblies.

The PML-N-led federal government has insisted on holding a referendum across the country on the establishment of new provinces or administrative units. However, the suggestion has faced severe backlash from its ally PPP. Speaking to the media outside Islamabad High Court on Monday, Zafar said the PTI was waiting for legislation on the creation of new provinces to be presented.

"We will make our decision after analysing the draft of the 28th amendment," he stated. Zafar said that the PTI founder had given a "straightforward instruction" regarding the formation of new provinces.

"He (Imran) has said that as long as provinces are concerned, they should be made," the PTI's leader in the Senate said.

However, Zafar cautioned that it should be observed how "they" want to make the provinces. "Khan sahib has said that whenever you get the draft, look into it [...] and then come to me and share its pros and cons," he added. While replying to a question, Barrister Zafar noted that a referendum was a constitutional way to get the opinion of the masses. However, he stressed that only public opinion could be sought through it and provinces must be created in the way "already mentioned in the Constitution" — with the relevant provincial assembly's consent. NEWS DESK

Nvidia reinstates Huang

Nvidia on Monday said it is reinstating Jensen Huang as chief executive, effective immediately.

Nvidia shares surged on the news, jumping more than 25% in premarket trading.

The company's move to bring Huang back marks a sharp reversal from its board's decision just days earlier to rule out his return.

Huang built Nvidia from a video-game chip designer into the dominant supplier of AI processors, steering its chip roadmap, customer deals and Washington ties along the way.

Jensen Huang's daughter helped steer Nvidia response to Megaspeed scrutiny, reports He resigned on November 12 after revelations of extramarital affairs, including one with a businesswoman US authorities suspect of spying for China, an allegation Beijing denies. The board said it was satisfied with Huang's candor and leadership ability and, after receiving input from senior U.S. government officials, saw no national security risk in his return. REUTERS



Portugal backs Pakistan on GSP Plus, praises peace role

Pakistan has Portugal's "full support" for the European Union's (EU) GSP+ status, Portuguese Minister of State and Foreign Affairs Paulo Rangel said on Monday during delegation-level talks between the two countries held in Islamabad.

Rangel, in his remarks, stressed that both Pakistan and the EU would mutually benefit from cooperation, adding that "we should not hesitate on developing these bilateral platforms". The Pakistani delegation was led by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. In his remarks, DPM Dar said, "Our focus is on strengthening our political ties, expanding bilateral trade and promoting investment." He proposed that the two countries regularly convene the Pakistan-Portugal Business Forum to help Pakistani and Portuguese companies "identify trading partners and explore joint venture opportunities".

He also suggested that the two delegations identify proposals for progress and review implementation through bilateral political consultations.

The two ministers also agreed to set up a joint ministerial commission (JMC) between Islamabad and Lisbon. Dar said the JMC would help promote business, trade and investment between the two countries by identifying the "hurdles" for consideration. Rangel said this was the first visit to Pakistan by a Portuguese delegation in 19 years. "We look forward to enhancing our bilateral relationship in the economic area," he said. He elaborated that a JMC would help "boost the economic dynamics of our relationship".

Rangel praised Pakistan for its role as a "peace-building actor at a global level" as well as its efforts in Middle East diplomacy and the Palestine issue. The visiting dignitary said that Portugal had a lot to learn from Pakistan, as it enters the United Nations Security Council.

The Portuguese FM added, "We really want to keep this bilateral political dialogue very intense during the two years that we will be holding a mandate in the Security Council of the United Nations because we know how attached Pakistan is to multilateralism, to the Charter of the United Nations, and to building peace and prosperity across the world." He also acknowledged the Pakistani diaspora in Portugal, describing it as a "quite dynamic and well-integrated community". Concluding his remarks, the Portuguese FM described his visit to Pakistan as "very fruitful and very positive".



According to a separate Foreign Office (FO) statement, DPM Dar and Rangel signed an agreement on the mutual exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic passports between the two countries. "The agreement will facilitate high-level engagement, diplomatic exchanges and further strengthen the longstanding and friendly relations between Pakistan and Portugal," FO said.

Separately, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Portugal's Minister of State and Foreign Affairs Paulo Rangel, in a meeting on Monday, focused on giving fresh political and economic impetus to Pakistan–Portugal relations and expanding cooperation across the full spectrum of bilateral relationship.

Welcoming FM Rangel, the prime minister appreciated Portugal's recognition of Pakistan's role in facilitating regional dialogue and its support for Pakistan's continued access to the European Union's GSP+ scheme.

The two sides discussed strengthening political contacts and widening cooperation in trade and investment, agriculture, information technology, textiles, tourism, education and cultural exchanges, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The Portuguese FM is on an official visit to Pakistan from November 22 to 23. The prime minister appreciated Portugal's acceptance of Pakistan's offer to establish a Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) for a multisectoral partnership.

He said that the Commission would provide a structured mechanism to identify shared priorities and follow up on practical cooperation. The leaders welcomed the Pakistan–Portugal Business Forum, held on the sidelines of the visit, which brought together around 20 Portuguese companies.

The forum provided an opportunity for Portuguese and Pakistani businesses to meet and explore trade, investment and partnership opportunities. The prime minister encouraged Portuguese companies to consider Pakistan's potential in areas including renewable energy, agriculture and food processing, textiles, technology and tourism. NEWS DESK

Publisher Ali Raza. Editor Yousaf Rafiq. Office Number 18, Pirzada Street, Pir Mohallah, New Pind Sukkur.

GLAMOUR DTM

Kai Returns To Strictly With Season-Best Score

Strictly Come Dancing professional dancer Kai Widdrington made an impressive return to the dancefloor on Saturday after illness forced him to miss the previous week's competition.

The 31-year-old reunited with his celebrity partner, Australian singer Delta Goodrem, for the show's special Blackpool edition. The pair opened the programme with a Quickstep to I Wanna Be the Only One by Eternal and Beba Winans, securing their highest score of the season.

Their performance earned 36 points from the judges. Host Emma Willis welcomed Kai back, describing his return as wonderful. The dancer responded enthusiastically, saying it was good to be back.

The judges were equally impressed with the couple's performance. Anton Du Beke praised their opening routine, while Motsi Mabuse described it as a celebration. Craig Revel Horwood pointed out an issue with Delta's left shoulder but complimented their musicality and overall performance. Head judge Shirley Ballas also praised the pair, saying the late Len Goodman would have been proud of them.

Kai's return followed a difficult week in which he suffered from a severe illness that left him hospitalised and unable to stand properly. He had missed the previous live show, with fellow professional dancer Aljaz Skorjanec stepping in as Delta's temporary partner.

Explaining his condition, Kai said he initially lost his appetite and struggled to eat, leaving him physically exhausted. Doctors advised him to rest, receive fluids and regain his strength before returning to training.

The dancer admitted that he had remained determined to return, even telling Delta over the phone while being taken to hospital that he would be back the following day. However, he later realised that he needed more time to recover.

NEWS DESK



Pop Idol Winner Sues BBC Scotland Over Sacking

Pop Idol winner Michelle McManus is taking legal action against BBC Scotland after being dropped from her radio presenting role, reportedly alleging discrimination by the broadcaster.

The 46-year-old singer, who shot to fame after winning the second series of Pop Idol in 2003, lost her presenting position in April following a major restructuring of BBC Scotland's afternoon programming. Her lawyers have now contacted the broadcaster on her behalf.

McManus had hosted the Afternoons programme and was replaced by actor Grant Stott and Landward presenter Arlene Stuart. The changes were part of wider cost-cutting measures and a reshuffle announced by BBC Scotland's head of audio and events, Victoria Easton Riley.

A source close to the singer said McManus had been committed to her presenting responsibilities and was deeply disappointed by the decision. She reportedly did not expect to lose her position and was unhappy with the way her departure was handled.

McManus was not the only female presenter affected by the changes. Poet Len Pennie and broadcaster Nicola Meighan also left the programme in May as part of the restructuring.

The changes came amid growing criticism of BBC Scotland's programming decisions. The broadcaster previously replaced its long-running Good Morning Scotland programme with BBC Scotland Breakfast. The new format was introduced as a faster-paced and more informal show, but some listeners criticised the decision.

Audience figures also indicated a decline in listenership. BBC Scotland reportedly lost around 30,000 morning listeners following the change, while its overall weekly radio audience fell to 753,000 between July and September.

Meanwhile, former BBC Scotland presenter Kaye Adams also left the broadcaster following an internal investigation into complaints of misconduct, which she continues to deny. She is reportedly considering legal action as well.

The broadcaster is facing further changes as part of a wider effort to reduce costs by £500 million over three years. The dedicated BBC Scotland television channel is also due to be scrapped. A BBC Scotland spokesperson said the organisation had not received a legal claim from McManus.

NEWS DESK



Simpson Ditches Blonde For Brunette

Jessica Simpson is embracing her new brunette look.

The singer recently dyed her signature blond locks for dark brown hair, and she continued showing them off with her Instagram followers.

In a photo she reposted from her hair stylist Ken Paves' Instagram Story, the 46-year-old actress rocked long, golden brunette beach waves.

The fashion designer and the celebrity hair stylist were seen enjoying a car ride together with the sunroof open to enjoy the sky at dusk.

In the past year, Simpson has been playing with her signature platinum blonde look and gradually adding more lowlights before eventually dyeing all of her hair darker for the colder seasons.

This comes amid her new romance with her Nashville boytoy, who is 13 years her junior, and reports that they are getting serious and 'making holiday plans together.'

In the months leading up to their separation, Simpson spent time in Nashville while preparing for her return to music. Simpson was married to the former NFL player for 10 years before they called it quits in January 2025.

Before tying the knot with Johnson, she was married to Nick Lachey from 2002 to 2006.

She shares daughters Maxwell, 14; Birdie, seven; and 13-year-old son Ace with Johnson.

About her separation with Johnson, Simpson said in a statement: 'Eric and I have been living separately, navigating a painful situation in our marriage.'

Breakup rumors spread in November 2024, when the music artist began teasing her new songs.

Her posts at the time included lyrics that further fueled the speculation about the reason behind the dissolution of their marriage, particularly rumors of infidelity on Johnson's part.

NEWS DESK

Kim Kardashian Stuns At Vegas GP For Hamilton

Kim Kardashian turned heads in Las Vegas on Friday as she arrived to support her boyfriend, Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton, at the Grand Prix.

The reality television star, 46, opted for a striking red leather catsuit featuring a plunging neckline and lace-up details along the legs. She completed the look with a long black leather trench coat, strappy red heels and oversized dark sunglasses.

Kardashian was spotted at the racing event watching from the garage and speaking to reporters. Several other celebrities, including actors Keanu Reeves and Colin Farrell, chef Gordon Ramsay and singer H.E.R., also attended the event.

The appearance comes as Kardashian and Hamilton's relationship continues to attract attention. The pair have been romantically linked since February and have since made their relationship public.

Hamilton recently spoke warmly about spending time with Kardashian's four children, North, Saint, Chicago and Psalm, whom she shares with her former husband, rapper Kanye West.

He also revealed that he bought the children a dog, named Halo.

Kardashian has supported Hamilton at several Formula One races this season, including events in Monaco and Singapore. The couple have also reportedly travelled together to Japan, Paris and the Cotswolds.

Last month, Kardashian offered a rare glimpse into her relationship during an episode of her reality show, The Kardashians. Speaking to comedian Nikki Glaser, she said she was "really, really happy" with how things were going.

She also suggested that Hamilton matched the qualities she had listed in a checklist of more than 50 traits she wanted in an ideal partner.

Kardashian recently explained that she had remained single for five years before beginning a new relationship. She said the time allowed her to focus on her children, career and personal growth, adding that she had wanted to heal completely before opening herself up to romance again.

The couple had known each other for years before their relationship began. Their romance has since become a regular subject of public interest, with the pair balancing demanding careers while making time for each other.

NEWS DESK



Selling Sunset Star Mary Bonnet Plans LA Exit

Selling Sunset star Mary Bonnet has revealed plans to leave Los Angeles, becoming the latest celebrity considering a move away from the California city.

The 46-year-old reality television personality discussed her plans while attending the opening of Kyu L.A. in Beverly Hills alongside her husband, Romain Bonnet, on Thursday.

Mary said the couple were likely to relocate to Nashville, citing difficult conditions in Los Angeles' property market.

The real estate personality also explained that she wanted a quieter lifestyle and more space for her growing number of pets. She currently has seven dogs and revealed that she had cared for as many as 13 at one point. Beyond her planned relocation, Mary is preparing to launch her own animal rescue organisation. She said her experience fostering animals had exposed her to problems within the rescue system and inspired her to take a more active role in helping them.

After spending 25 years in Los Angeles, the reality star said she was ready for a more peaceful environment.

Her plans come months after it was confirmed that she would not return for the 10th season of Netflix's Selling Sunset. Chelsea Lazkani, Emma Hernan, Alanna Gold and Nicole Young were also among the cast members not returning.

Mary previously expressed disappointment over the direction of the programme, explaining that she had originally joined with hopes of promoting female empowerment and a positive image of the real estate industry.

Her potential departure comes amid a wider trend of celebrities leaving Los Angeles for other parts of the United States.

Comedian Joe Rogan relocated to Austin, Texas, while actor Dennis Quaid and comedian Nikki Glaser have also moved away from the city. Other prominent names, including Ellen DeGeneres, Adam Levine and Gwyneth Paltrow, have chosen Montecito.

NEWS DESK

DTM MONEY

PAKISTAN-PORTUGAL INVESTMENT FORUM

SIFC pitches $40b projects to boost bilateral trade

The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) of Pakistan and Portugal's Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade (AICEP) recently convened a high-profile Pakistan-Portugal Business and Investment Forum, marking a significant step toward enhancing bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two nations.



The forum served as a platform to invite Portuguese investors to explore promising investment projects worth $40 billion across diverse sectors of Pakistan's economy.

Addressing the inaugural session, Dr. Erfa Iqbal, Additional Secretary (Country Wing) of SIFC, emphasized the enormous potential for investment and trade between Pakistan and Portugal.

She highlighted sectors such as textiles and cotton, information technology, aerospace, defence, manufacturing, electric vehicles, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, agriculture, and food processing as key areas ripe for collaboration.

Dr. Erfa underlined that Pakistan has a pipeline of projects valued at $22 billion in sectors including industry and production, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, mining, ports and maritime, tourism, oil and gas, power, food security, and agriculture. Despite this, the existing bilateral trade volume of approximately $250 million remains significantly below the untapped potential, signaling vast opportunities for expansion.

The SIFC invited Portuguese investors to leverage Pakistan's attractive investment environment by engaging through various mechanisms such as joint ventures, public sector organizations, potential investment fund structures, and direct investment opportunities. The focus is on fostering mutually beneficial partnerships that can drive industrial development, technology transfer, and export growth.

Dr. Erfa emphasized that strengthening cooperation between Pakistan and Portugal is expected to diversify economic engagement and promote industrial collaboration, creating sustainable commercial linkages that benefit both countries.

This strategic alliance aligns with the shared interest to transform trade potential into actionable outcomes that support long-term economic growth.

Representing Portugal, Mr. Bruno Paed Moreira, Executive Member of the Board at AICEP, expressed optimism about the growing economic ties. He stressed Portugal's strategic position as a gateway for Pakistan to access the European Union and the broader market of Portuguese-speaking countries worldwide, which collectively comprise over 260 million people.

Moreira identified textile, infrastructure, communication, IT and software, renewable energy, agriculture, food processing, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, logistics, defence, and security as sectors promising fruitful bilateral cooperation. He suggested that enhanced engagement between investment and trade institutions from both sides could significantly boost bilateral economic relations and accelerate trade and investment flows in the near future.

The forum underscored the commitment of both countries to deepen their economic relationship, aiming to foster a favorable environment for investment through increased dialogue, joint opportunities, and innovative partnerships.

By tapping into their complementary strengths, Pakistan and Portugal are poised to build a robust and dynamic economic partnership that can benefit businesses and broader communities in both nations.

This initiative marks a forward-looking chapter in Pakistan-Portugal relations, opening avenues for substantial growth and shared prosperity on a solid foundation of trade, investment, and cooperation. NEWS DESK

PSX edges higher, gains over 90 points

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a positive session on Monday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index gaining 91.29 points, a slight upward change of 0.05 percent, to close at 177,473.86 points against 177,382.57 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 551.452 million shares, compared to 620.697 million shares traded in the previous session. The traded value of the ready market stood at Rs22.501 billion, slightly down from Rs22.596 billion a day earlier.

Meanwhile, total market capitalisation decreased to Rs19.254 trillion from Rs19.260 trillion recorded in the previous session. Out of 496 companies that traded in the ready market, 199 posted gains, 270 suffered losses, while 27 remained unchanged.

WorldCall Telecom led the volume chart with 88.799 million shares, followed by Pervez Ahmed Co with 62.474 million shares and TPL Life Insurance with 16.105 million shares. Among the top gainers in the ready market, PIA Holding Company Limited8 surged by Rs279.51 to close at Rs14,280.51, while Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited advanced by Rs164.00 to settle at Rs26,519.00.

On the losing side, Khyber Textile Mills Limited declined by Rs213.12 to close at Rs1,918.10, while GOC (Pak) Limited fell by Rs27.25 to Rs264.72.

In the futures (DFC) market, turnover stood at 528.280 million shares with a traded value of Rs14.682 billion, compared with 106.995 million shares worth Rs4.799 billion in the previous session. Of the 306 companies traded in the DFC market, 133 advanced, 169 declined, and four remained unchanged. NEWS DESK

SECP registers two new REIT schemes

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has registered two new Real Estate Investment Trust schemes, 'ATMT Dual REIT Series 1' and 'Imperium Tower REIT Scheme', bringing the country's total to 31.

According to a statement, ATMT Dual REIT Series 1 is a hybrid scheme involving both property development and rental income in Islamabad. The Imperium Tower REIT Scheme is a rental scheme that invests in commercial real estate in Lahore through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

With this addition, Pakistan's REIT sector now comprises 31 registered schemes and 43 licensed REIT Management Companies. Of these, seven are listed on the stock exchange, while 21 are Shariah-compliant. As of 30 September 2026, the sector's total assets stood at Rs275.85 billion.

"REIT schemes are an effective means of providing organised investment and new opportunities in the real estate sector," said Dr Kabir Ahmad Sidhu, SECP Chairman. He reiterated that the SECP will continue to promote the sector through a regulatory framework based on transparency, best governance, and investor protection. news desk

NEEM gets investment from ADB ventures to help expand digital payments

Neem, a Pakistan-based B2B fintech company, that helps businesses receive, manage, and pay out money digitally, has secured an investment from ADB Ventures, the venture capital arm of the ADB.

The seed investment will support Neem's product development, help expand its team, and accelerate the onboarding of enterprise and merchant clients across Pakistan, said ADB press release here Monday.

It said, Pakistan had made strong progress in digitizing consumer payments, with the State Bank of Pakistan's instant payment system, Raast, and mobile wallets bringing millions of people onto digital rails. Business payments, however, have not kept pace.

Quoting State Bank of Pakistan, it said, an estimated 71% of retail transaction value is still settled in cash, and companies looking to go digital must integrate separately with banks, wallets, payroll providers, and reconciliation tools, a process that can be slow, costly, and hard to scale.

Neem aims to close this gap by giving businesses a single platform to manage how money comes in, how it is tracked, and how it is paid out. Its API-first system combines collections, disbursements, a programmable ledger, and finance workflows, and



connects directly with a company's existing operating systems to automate settlement and reconciliation in real time.

Neem currently serves more than 70 enterprise clients across logistics, utilities, insurance, manufacturing, and retail.

"Pakistan is laying a strong foundation for digital payments, and the next step is ensuring that businesses of all sizes can fully benefit from this progress," said Emma Fan, ADB Country Director for Pakistan.

"Neem is helping enterprises move away from cash and fragmented systems toward payment solutions that are faster, more transparent, and easier to manage," Emma Fan added.

The impact extends well beyond the enterprises Neem serves directly. As businesses digitize their payments, the suppliers, small merchants, and gig workers they pay are brought into the formal financial system.

Neem's solutions are built to meet the payment needs of businesses of every size, including women-owned businesses and micro-entrepreneurs, so access to modern financial infrastructure is not limited to large enterprises.

As part of its lending portfolio, Neem also gives employees responsible access to wages they have already earned. The offering focuses on blue-collar workers in industries that employ large workforces across Pakistan and helps reduce reliance on informal borrowing.

ADB Ventures invests in early-stage technology companies building solutions that address the most pressing challenges across Asia and the Pacific, with a focus on sectors including financial technology, agricultural technology, climate resilience, and inclusive growth. NEWS DESK

MoU inked to provide retail access to Govt Sukuk

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), JazzCash and Next Capital Limited have penned a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to bring Government of Pakistan's Sukuk to millions of retail investors across the country through JazzCash.

The initiative brings together the market infrastructure of PSX, the nationwide digital reach of JazzCash and the brokerage and technology capabilities of Next Capital. With an aim to democratize access to GOP Sukuk through a simplified digital journey, the move will broaden the retail investor base and bring household savings and investments into Pakistan's formal capital market.

The MoU was signed at PSX, Karachi, in the presence of Farrukh H. Sabzwari, MD & CEO, PSX; Murtaza Ali, CEO, JazzCash; Najam Ali, Vice Chairman, Next Capital and Humaira Asad, CEO Next Capital.

Under the MoU, PSX will provide the market access with NCCPL supporting seamless account opening, clearing and settlement. JazzCash will lead customer reach alongside digital distribution. Next Capital will act as Securities Broker providing the investment platform. The parties are to finalize the operational and commercial frameworks. Short-term sovereign hybrid Sukuk will lead the rollout, with a broader range of



products to follow.

At this occasion, Farrukh H. Sabzwari, MD & CEO, PSX, said: "This initiative marks an important step towards widening access to the capital market for retail investors across Pakistan. It brings together the market infrastructure of PSX, the digital reach of JazzCash and the brokerage and technology capabilities of Next Capital, opening doors for millions of Pakistanis to invest in Government Sukuk through a simple digital journey. It also sits well with PSX's vision of democratizing access to Shariah-compliant investment avenues."

Murtaza Ali, CEO, JazzCash, reiterated: "PSX has built a capital market Pakistan can be proud of, and we are delighted to partner with it to take that market to every corner of the country. After Treasury Bills and equities, Government Sukuk is the natural next chapter for our customers. Together with PSX and Next Capital, we are opening the door for a new generation of Pakistani investors."

Humaira Asad, CEO, Next Capital, further reinforced investing should be as simple as any digital payment. Next Capital is building on that belief, with the user experience at the centre of everything we do. This partnership allows us to bring that experience to millions of JazzCash users through Government Sukuk.

For many of them, their first investment will be in Pakistan itself. We are proud to partner with PSX and JazzCash on this journey. NEWS DESK

Pakistan to import more wheat

Pakistan has decided to import additional wheat to stabilise prices in the domestic market and ensure sufficient supplies to meet national requirements.

The country plans to import an additional 800,000 metric tonnes of wheat to fulfil domestic demand.

The Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) has issued its third international tender for wheat imports, with November 30 set as the deadline for submitting bids.

Pakistan has already signed agreements to import 550,000 metric tonnes of wheat.

According to officials, the purpose of the additional imports is to maintain national wheat reserves, ensure an uninterrupted supply and stabilise flour prices in the domestic market.

Last week, shipment of imported wheat arrived at Karachi Port from Romania to meet the wheat requirements of Karachi and other parts of Sindh.

The vessel, MV Caravus, carrying 58,488 metric tonnes of imported wheat, has berthed at berths 14 and 15 of the Karachi Gateway Terminal (KGT). INP



Gold price rebounds by Rs 7,800 per tola

The prices of gold witnessed a significant increase in the local market on Monday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola rising by Rs7,800 to settle at Rs384,136, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs6,687 to Rs329,334, while 10 grams of 22-karat gold rose by Rs6,130 to Rs301,900.

In the international market, the price of gold increased by $78 to $3,616 per ounce, the association reported.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs135 to Rs4,735, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs116 to Rs4,059.

The price of silver in the international market also increased by $1.35 to $42.57 per ounce, the association added.

Meanwhile, Gold prices rebounded from a more than one-year low on



Monday amid a pause in the dollar rally, while investors looked ahead to upcoming US inflation data for further clues on the interest rate trajectory. Spot gold climbed 2.4% to $3,617.68 per ounce by 1242 GMT after hitting its lowest level since September 2025 on Friday. Prices declined 9% last week amid pressure from a hawkish US rate outlook and an AI-linked stocks selloff that prompted some investors to liquidate gold to raise cash. US gold futures gained 2.9% to $3,618.10 per ounce.

"I would describe today's rebound in gold as a stabilization following last week's sharp selloff, with the weaker US dollar providing some support," said UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo.

"The longer-term diversification case for gold remains intact, but near-term volatility is likely to remain high."

The dollar drifted near its highest level in 19 months on Monday as traders took a breather from the stock market rout while bets eased on the Federal Reserve aggressively increasing rates in December.

Market participants continue to price in a 25-basis-point Fed hike in December, while expectations of a larger 50-basis-point increase have eased, according to CME's FedWatch Spot silver climbed 2.7% to $42.31 per ounce after hitting its lowest level since September 2025 on Friday. Platinum gained 1.2% to $1,314.17 per ounce and palladium rose 0.4% to $896.43.

"If gold stabilises and the US dollar/rates backdrop turns friendlier, silver has greater room for positioning to rebuild and could rebound more sharply. Until then, its higher beta remains a double-edged sword," Christopher Wong, precious metals strategist at OCBC, said in a note.

"We continue to favour platinum over palladium on a medium-term basis, while recognising that both can stay vulnerable to the current macro and liquidation backdrop," he added. NEWS DESK

WORLD DTM

Denmark Plans Mobile Phone Ban In Schools From 2027



Denmark plans to introduce a ban on mobile phones and other private internet-enabled devices in primary and lower secondary schools from the 2027 academic year. The proposal will also require schools to filter online content to limit students' access to distracting websites during lessons.

The Danish Education Ministry announced the proposed measures on Monday, saying they aim to create a better learning environment by reducing digital distractions in classrooms.

Education Minister Magnus Heunicke said children should be able to attend school without being constantly distracted by social media, online shopping and gaming.

The proposed restrictions will cover mobile phones as well as other privately owned electronic devices with internet access. Schools will also be required to introduce content filters to block websites considered unrelated to education or teaching activities.

The restrictions are expected to apply during lesson time. However, individual municipalities and schools will have the authority to decide which websites should be blocked under the filtering system.

Denmark's move comes amid growing international concern over the impact of smartphones on students' concentration, classroom behaviour and learning. Several countries have already introduced restrictions on mobile phone use in schools.

The Netherlands, South Korea and Italy are among the countries that have banned smartphones in schools. Poland and the Czech Republic also proposed similar restrictions in June.

If adopted, Denmark's plan would extend the country's efforts to limit digital distractions in classrooms and ensure that students can focus more effectively on their studies.

The proposal is expected to take effect from the start of the new academic year in 2027. NEWS DESK

Armenia Moves Closer To Azerbaijan Peace Deal

Armenia has unveiled a draft constitution aimed at removing a major obstacle to a formal peace agreement with neighbouring Azerbaijan, marking a significant step towards ending decades of conflict between the two South Caucasus countries.

The proposed charter was published on Monday as Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan seeks to secure a lasting settlement with Baku following his re-election in June. The vote was widely seen as a test of public support for his handling of the peace process.

Addressing the nation after the draft's release, Pashinyan said he was staking his political and personal credibility on the constitutional changes. He expressed confidence that adopting the new constitution would allow both countries to sign and ratify a peace agreement and establish lasting stability.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have experienced intermittent conflict since the late 1980s, largely over Nagorno-Karabakh. The mountainous territory was controlled for decades by ethnic Armenians before Azerbaijan regained control through a military offensive in 2023. The operation led nearly the entire ethnic Armenian population of the region to flee to Armenia.

The two countries signed a US-backed joint peace declaration last August. Since then, they have taken steps to restore trade connections and have described relations as being in a state of real peace. However, a formal agreement has remained out of reach.

A key disagreement has centred on the preamble of Armenia's existing constitution. It refers to a Soviet-era declaration calling for the reunification of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, which was then an autonomous region within Soviet Azerbaijan.

Baku has objected to the reference, viewing it as a potential territorial claim. The proposed constitution rewrites the preamble and removes the wording that has been a major sticking point in negotiations.

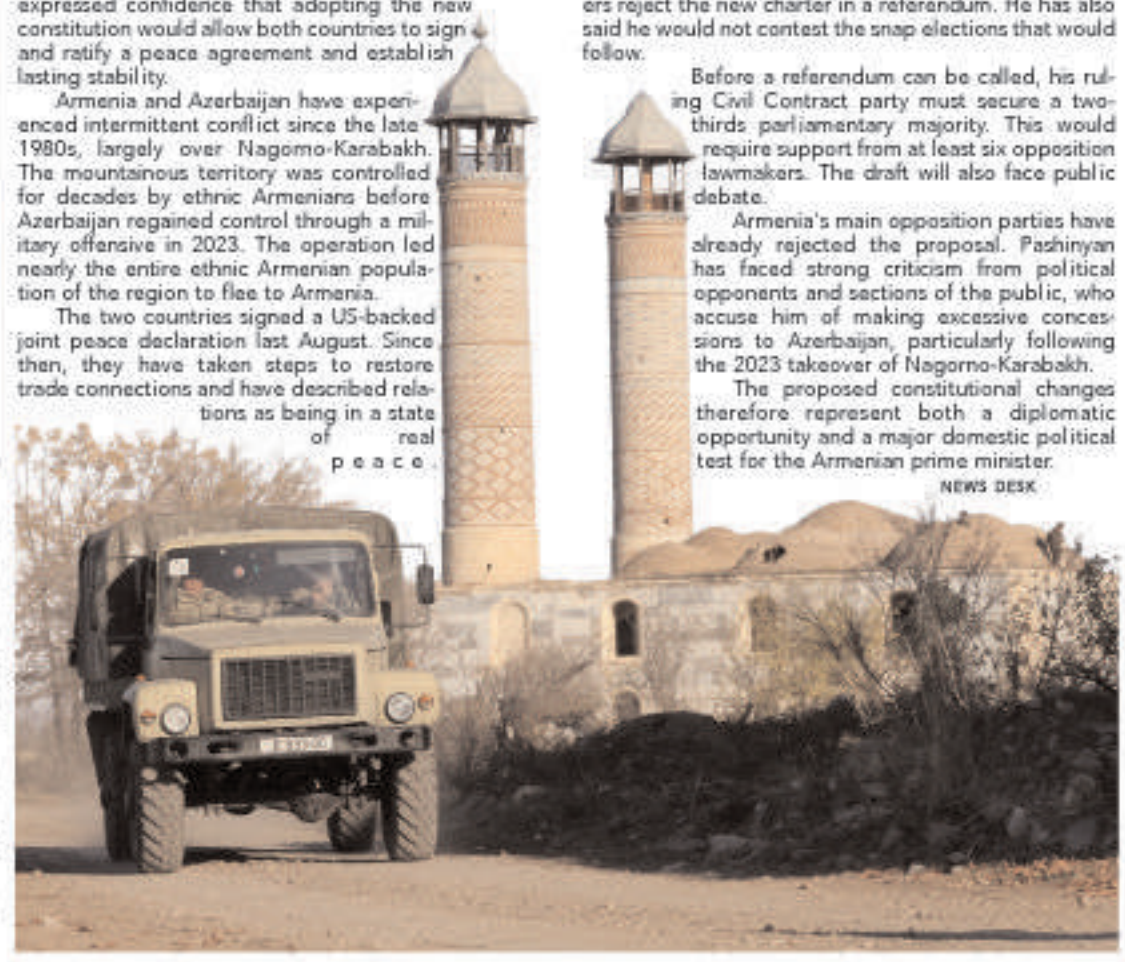
The constitutional proposal carries significant political risks for Pashinyan. He has pledged to resign if voters reject the new charter in a referendum. He has also said he would not contest the snap elections that would follow.

Before a referendum can be called, his ruling Civil Contract party must secure a two-thirds parliamentary majority. This would require support from at least six opposition lawmakers. The draft will also face public debate.

Armenia's main opposition parties have already rejected the proposal. Pashinyan has faced strong criticism from political opponents and sections of the public, who accuse him of making excessive concessions to Azerbaijan, particularly following the 2023 takeover of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The proposed constitutional changes therefore represent both a diplomatic opportunity and a major domestic political test for the Armenian prime minister.

NEWS DESK



Sheikh Hasina Faces Arrest On Return



Bangladesh has warned that former prime minister Sheikh Hasina will be arrested and imprisoned if she returns to the country, as tensions rise over her reported plans to come home in December.

The government is also pressing India to extradite Hasina under an existing treaty. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaed Islam said Dhaka expects New Delhi to honour the agreement and hand over the former leader, who has been living in India since fleeing Bangladesh in August 2024.

In an interview, Obaed said Hasina would be taken into custody immediately if she entered Bangladesh. She added that the legal process would then take its course.

India's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In April, New Delhi said it was examining Bangladesh's extradition request. Hasina fled the country after a wave of protests forced an end to her long rule. She has since received a death sentence in Bangladesh, while her Awami League party has been banned. The United Nations has estimated that up to 1,400 people were killed during the unrest. The former prime minister has reportedly sought a new passport and identity card ahead of a planned return in December. However, the Bangladeshi government has rejected her requests. NEWS DESK

Thai Court Reduces MP's Jail Term For Royal Insult

A Thai appeals court halved a six-year jail sentence on Monday for royal insult given to an opposition MP over social media posts, but she could still lose her parliamentary seat pending a further appeal.

Rukchanok Srinork, a lawmaker from the progressive People's Party, was sentenced to six years in jail in December 2023 for breaching Thailand's strict royal insult charge and the Computer Crimes Act.

But she was granted bail at the time, allowing her to retain her position as an MP.

Thailand's constitution disqualifies lawmakers sentenced to prison and held under a court order, even if their conviction is not yet final. The Bangkok appeals court on Monday upheld her conviction over one social media post but acquitted her over a second, cutting her jail term to three years, a court official told AFP. Rukchanok, 33, was again granted bail, with a 500,000 baht ($15,000) security, her lawyer Worawut Butrmatr told reporters outside the court.



She plans to appeal to the Supreme Court, Worawut said.

"I will fight on and continue to do everything I can through the judicial process," said Rukchanok, who received hugs and flowers from supporters.

People's Party leader Natthaphong Ruengpanyawut said his party - which came second in February elections - "still believes in Rukchanok's innocence and hopes the court will deliver justice".

"In the bigger picture, we are concerned about freedom of speech in our country," he added.

Rukchanok was convicted over two 2021 posts on X.

One post criticised Thailand's COVID-19 vaccine procurement and another shared a message referencing the French Revolution.

Rukchanok has denied the charges, arguing that screenshots of the posts could have been fabricated by political opponents.

More than 40 other current and former progressive MPs, including Natthaphong, are facing a separate ethics trial over attempts to reform the royal insult, or lese-majeste, law. NEWS DESK

Around 450 Schools In Germany Receive Bomb Threats



Around 450 schools across Germany received bomb threats through emails on Monday morning, raising security concerns and prompting police authorities to investigate the reports.

The threats were reportedly sent to educational institutions in different parts of the country. The information was reported by German newspaper Bild, which cited police in the southwestern city of Freiburg.

Authorities are expected to assess the threats and determine whether any of them pose a genuine security risk. The reports have raised concerns among school administrations, students and parents.

However, no further details were immediately available about the origin of the emails, the specific schools targeted or whether any suspicious devices had been discovered. The scale of the reported threats has placed security arrangements at schools under scrutiny as authorities work to establish the credibility of the messages and identify those responsible. NEWS DESK

Istanbul Protests Target Media Crackdown

Thousands of people took to the streets of Istanbul on Sunday to protest what they described as growing restrictions on opposition voices and independent media in Turkey.

The demonstration was organised by the main opposition Yeni Parti following a police raid on Sozcu TV, during which senior staff members were arrested and a government-appointed trustee was installed at the broadcaster.

The takeover marked the third such move against an independent media organisation in a year. Similar action had previously been taken against Tele1, Halk TV and the digital news outlet T24.



Carrying copies of the newspaper Sözcü, demonstrators marched through Istanbul's Besiktas neighbourhood. They held a large banner demanding freedom of thought, press freedom and the release of journalists.

Protesters chanted slogans and expressed concern over what they described as a shrinking space for criticism of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his government.

Several demonstrators said the pressure on independent broadcasters was limiting public access to different viewpoints. They also raised concerns about restrictions on social media, which many people increasingly rely on to obtain news.

The protest comes amid years of mounting pressure on press freedom in Turkey. Journalists have faced prosecutions, digital censorship and accusations of spreading false information. These developments have drawn criticism from rights organisations both inside and outside the country.

Over the past two months, Turkish authorities have also arrested several journalists over their reporting on a multi-billion-dollar investment fund scandal. At least two remain in pre-trial detention.

According to figures from the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA), 25 journalists are currently behind bars in Turkey.

The latest demonstration reflects growing opposition concerns over the treatment of independent media and the ability of journalists to report freely without facing legal or administrative action. NEWS DESK

SPORTS

DTM

PSL Opener, Ceremony In Peshawar: Naqvi

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi said on Monday the opening ceremony and the first match of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) would take place in Peshawar, Aaj News reported.

The 12th edition of the PSL is scheduled from March 18 to May 2, 2027.

Addressing a news conference in Peshawar alongside Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, Naqvi congratulated the people of KP on the revival of cricket in the region.

He stated that whenever the Governor met him, he brought up hosting cricket matches in KP. Naqvi, who is also the country's interior minister, noted that the law and order situation in the province was improving, and further steps were being taken to restore cricket activities.

PCB chairman mentioned that the PSL opening ceremony was going to be held in Peshawar after 12 years.

He confirmed that both the opening ceremony and the inaugural match of the event would be hosted in the city, adding that serious efforts had been made last year as well, though it could not materialise at that time.

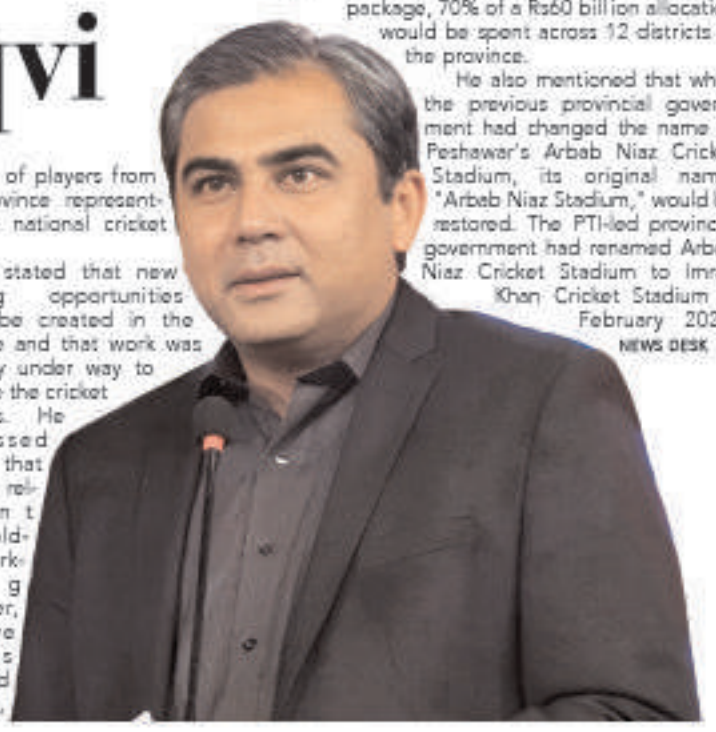
The PCB chairman also announced that a T20 tournament featuring three Pakistani teams would be held in Peshawar during the third week of January.

According to Naqvi, a senior national squad, Pakistan Shaheens, and the Pakistan Under-19 team will participate in the January tournament.

The aim of this initiative is to promote cricketing activities in KP and provide greater opportunities for the revival of the sport, according to the PCB chairman.

Naqvi remarked that KP possesses immense cricketing talent, with a large number of players from the province representing the national cricket team.

He stated that new sporting opportunities would be created in the province and that work was currently under way to upgrade the cricket grounds. He expressed hope that with all relevant stakeholders working together, positive results would emerge, opening new avenues for the youth through the promotion of sports.



KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi stated that out of the Rs160 billion federal package, 70% of a Rs60 billion allocation would be spent across 12 districts of the province.

He also mentioned that while the previous provincial government had changed the name of Peshawar's Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium, its original name, "Arbab Niaz Stadium," would be restored. The PTI-led provincial government had renamed Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium to Imran Khan Cricket Stadium in February 2025. NEWS DESK

Thitikul Wins Third Straight LPGA Title



Thailand's Jeeno Thitikul has secured her third consecutive CME Group Tour Championship title after delivering an impressive final-round performance at Tiburon Golf Club in Florida.

The world number two carded a seven-under-par 65 in the final round to finish the tournament at 24 under par. Her victory earned her the $4 million top prize and marked the 12th LPGA Tour title of her career.

The 23-year-old made a strong start to the final round with an eagle before adding five birdies to strengthen her position at the top of the leaderboard.

Thitikul described her relationship with the Florida course as special, joking that she hoped it would remain unchanged until her retirement. She said the course had become like a close friend throughout her successful career. Her latest triumph also brought a major financial milestone. Thitikul surpassed the previous LPGA Tour career earnings record held by Swedish legend Annika Sorenstam. She has now accumulated $24,292,858 in career prize money, moving ahead of Sorenstam's previous record of $22,583,693.

Japan's Akie Iwai finished second at 22 under par after also producing a final-round 65. American Nelly Korda secured third place at 20 under following a round of 68. Korda also moved past Sorenstam to become the second-highest earner in LPGA Tour history, behind Thitikul. South Korea's A-Lim Kim, who began the final round with a one-shot lead, struggled early in her round. A double bogey and a bogey over her opening three holes damaged her title hopes. She eventually finished with a level-par 72 and shared seventh place.

England's Lottie Woad recorded a 67 to finish at 14 under par, while compatriot Charley Hull ended one stroke further back after carding a 73 in the final round.

Thitikul's latest success further strengthens her position among the leading players in women's golf, as she continues to build an impressive record at the season-ending championship. NEWS DESK

De Villiers Accuses Australia Of Earlier Ball-Tampering



Former South Africa batter AB de Villiers has made fresh allegations of ball-tampering against Australia, claiming the controversial practice began in the opening Test of the 2018 series in Durban, rather than the subsequent match in Port Elizabeth.

The allegations have revived debate over one of cricket's biggest controversies, which resulted in lengthy suspensions for former Australia captain Steve Smith, vice-captain David Warner and batter Cameron Bancroft.

The trio were punished after Bancroft was caught using sandpaper to alter the condition of the ball during the third Test in Cape Town. The incident triggered widespread criticism and led to major changes within Australian cricket.

The controversy returned to the spotlight after former Australia batter Usman Khawaja made fresh claims in his autobiography that sandpaper had also been used during the second Test in Port Elizabeth, now known as Gqeberha.

Warner and Bancroft have supported Khawaja's account of the second match. However, de Villiers has now gone further, alleging that the ball had already been tampered with during the series opener in Durban. Speaking on his YouTube channel, ABD360, de Villiers said he had no doubt that the ball had been altered during the first Test. He urged those involved to acknowledge their actions rather than continue denying the allegations.

The former South African captain pointed to the unusually early reverse swing produced by Australia's bowling attack at Kingsmead. He argued that the ball was moving in a manner he considered unusual for the conditions and the stage of the match.

De Villiers said he could not confirm whether sandpaper or another object had been used, but insisted that the ball had been deliberately altered. He also suggested that Australia's bowlers would have been aware of what was happening.

His comments contradict Bancroft's recent account. In a detailed article published last week, Bancroft specifically denied that sandpaper had been used during the Durban Test. He said Australia had relied on more traditional methods of maintaining the ball during that match. He also referred to practices such as working on the seam, while expressing uncertainty about whether sweets or mints had been involved.

Australia's bowling attack during the series and former head coach Darren Lehmann have consistently denied having knowledge of ball-tampering beyond the incident in Cape Town. Current Australia Test captain Pat Cummins, who was part of the bowling attack during the series, has also rejected Khawaja's allegations. NEWS DESK

Alcaraz Conquers ATP Finals

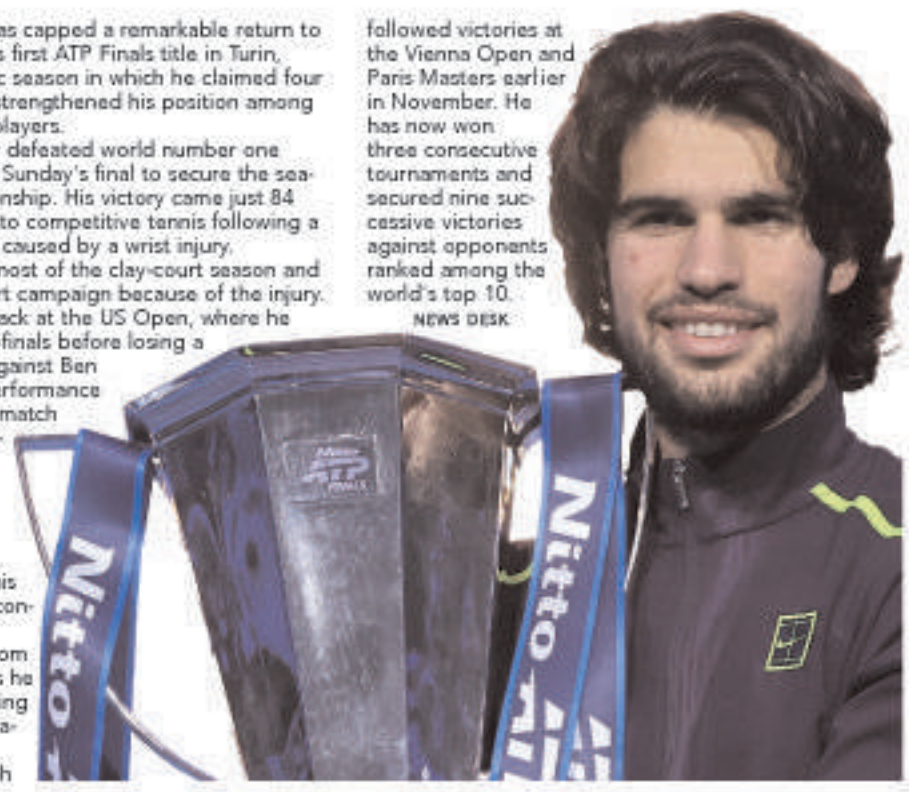
Carlos Alcaraz has capped a remarkable return to tennis by winning his first ATP Finals title in Turin, completing a historic season in which he claimed four major trophies and strengthened his position among the sport's leading players.

The Spanish star defeated world number one Alexander Zverev in Sunday's final to secure the season-ending championship. His victory came just 84 days after returning to competitive tennis following a four-month absence caused by a wrist injury.

Alcaraz missed most of the clay-court season and the entire grass-court campaign because of the injury. He made his comeback at the US Open, where he reached the quarter-finals before losing a five-set encounter against Ben Shelton. His early performance reflected his lack of match fitness, but he quickly regained his rhythm.

Since returning, the 23-year-old has won 21 of his 22 matches, including his last 14 consecutive contests. He has also claimed four titles from the five tournaments he has played, completing a remarkable late-season run.

His latest triumph followed victories at the Vienna Open and Paris Masters earlier in November. He has now won three consecutive tournaments and secured nine successive victories against opponents ranked among the world's top 10. NEWS DESK



Price Claims Fourth Grand Slam Crown

Welsh darts star Gerwyn Price has ended his four-year wait for a major PDC title after defeating Dutch player Gian van Veen 16-11 in the final of the Grand Slam of Darts. The 41-year-old produced an impressive performance to secure his fourth Grand Slam crown and claim the £200,000 prize money along with the prestigious Eric Bristow Trophy.

Price last won a major title in 2022 when he lifted the World Series crown. His latest victory comes after a difficult run in several major competitions this year, where he repeatedly fell short in the closing stages.

He finished as runner-up at the World Matchplay, World Grand Prix and World Series. He also suffered semi-final defeats in the Premier League, World Masters, UK Open and European Championships.

The Grand Slam final initially remained closely contested, with both players exchanging breaks of throw. Price produced impressive checkouts of 150 and 145, but the contest was level at 7-7 after 14 legs. A crucial moment came in the 15th leg when Price eventually secured double two on his sixth attempt to take the lead. The Welshman then raised his level after the interval, winning five consecutive legs to establish a commanding advantage.

Van Veen attempted to revive his challenge by breaking back after another break, but Price maintained control and prevented the Dutchman from mounting a serious comeback. Speaking after the victory, Price said the title meant a great deal to him following several disappointing final appearances during the year. He admitted that he had felt particularly nervous during the match but was delighted to finally convert his opportunities into a major trophy. NEWS DESK



Hesson Backs Pakistan's Rising Stars

Pakistan head coach Mike Hesson has praised the contribution of emerging players following the team's Test series victory over Sri Lanka, saying several newcomers delivered crucial performances despite their limited experience at the international level.

Speaking on The Straight Drive with Salman Butt, Hesson said six relatively inexperienced players made a strong impression during the two-match series. He described their performances as an encouraging start and highlighted their role in decisive moments.



Hesson also credited senior members of the squad for helping the newcomers adjust to Test cricket. He said the young players still had plenty to learn but had shown promising signs for the future.

The coach also discussed Pakistan's approach to preparing Test pitches, saying conditions would vary according to the opposition and the demands of upcoming tours. He stressed the need to prepare players for challenging conditions in countries such as South Africa, Australia, England and New Zealand.

Hesson said Pakistan wanted balanced surfaces that offered opportunities to both batters and bowlers rather than pitches heavily favouring fast bowlers. He explained that the new ball should provide assistance to the seamers, while batting conditions should improve as the match progresses.

Discussing the pace attack, Hesson said Pakistan felt the absence of a specialist swing bowler during the second innings. He praised the qualities of the available fast bowlers, including Saqib, Abbas, Razaullah and Jamal, but stressed that adding swing to the attack would make it more effective.

He also appreciated the efforts of the two relatively new players at the top of the attack, saying they handled pressure well and gained valuable experience.

Hesson singled out Azan Awais for praise, highlighting his ability to manage difficult batting situations. He said the youngster's hard-fought score of more than 40 in the first innings and his unbeaten effort later in the match would provide a confidence boost.

The coach also defended Salman Ali Agha's contribution after questions about his bowling performance. Hesson acknowledged that Agha struggled with his first two overs but said he improved his line and length as the innings progressed. NEWS DESK

Sri Lanka Snatch Dramatic Win Over Pakistan



Sri Lanka Women secured a narrow four-run victory over Pakistan Women in a closely fought encounter in the Super Sixes stage of the ICC Women's Emerging Nations Trophy 2026 in Ajman on Monday.

Pakistan, chasing a target of 141, managed 136 for nine in their allotted 20 overs. A late batting effort from Tasmia Rubab kept their hopes alive, but the Green-shirts fell just short of the target.

Tasmia remained unbeaten on 23 from only 11 deliveries, smashing three sixes. However, her late contribution could not prevent Pakistan from suffering defeat in the seventh match of the Super Sixes at the Karwan Sports Club Cricket Ground.

Pakistan struggled early in the chase, losing three wickets for just 16 runs within the first four overs. Omaima Sohail attempted to rebuild the innings with 36 off 37 balls, including three boundaries, while Tuba Hassan added 24 from 18 deliveries, striking two fours and a six. Sri Lanka maintained pressure through regular wickets and restricted Pakistan's scoring opportunities. Sathya Sandeepani led the bowling attack with three wickets for 29 runs in four overs. Sugandika Kumari claimed two wickets, while Malki Madara and Nilakshika Silva took one each. Earlier, Sri Lanka posted 140 for six after being sent in to bat. Imesha Dulani top-scored with 56 from 38 balls, hitting five fours and two sixes. Vishmi Gunaratne provided valuable support with 30 off 23 deliveries.



Pakistan's Umm-e-Hani was the standout bowler, taking three wickets for 17 runs in her four overs. Tuba Hassan and Nashra Sandhu claimed one wicket apiece. NEWS DESK